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College English is published monthly from October to May at the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. Subscription price, \$3.00 per year, single copies, 40 cents; in Canada, \$3.35; in other countries in the Postal Union, \$3.60. *College English* and the *English Journal*, to one address, \$4.50; in Canada, \$5.20; in other countries in the Postal Union, \$5.70.

Correspondence from libraries, agents, and dealers should be addressed to the University of Chicago Press. All other communications should be addressed to *College English*, 211 West Sixty-eighth Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1939, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

[PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS]



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COLLEGE ENGLISH

Volume 8

DECEMBER 1946

Number 3

P-N Fiction

GRANVILLE HICKS¹

I

THE army had a convenient pair of letters, P-N, standing for psychoneurotic. The term embraced actual psychotics—that is, men so out of touch with reality that they could not perform the ordinary social functions—and also those neurotics whose functioning was impaired for the army's particular purposes. No figures, I think, have been released, but it is generally assumed that many young men were rejected by selective service on P-N grounds and that many more were released from the army or sent to institutions.

If the public was made conscious of psychopathology by the army's findings, its education has been continued in a series of recent novels. Early in the series, for example, there was Charles Jackson's *The Lost Weekend*. Drunkenness has figured in countless novels and plays, but *The Lost Weekend* is different from *Ten Nights in a Barroom* or even London's *John Barleycorn* in concentrating on alcoholism as a psychopathological phenomenon. Published in 1944, it gained in popularity during the follow-

ing year and was given a new vogue by a serious and much-praised screen version.

A few months after the appearance of *The Lost Weekend*, its publishers tried to make a best-seller out of Carlton Brown's *Brainstorm*, a story of mental disintegration. *Brainstorm* was not the success that *The Lost Weekend* was and did not deserve to be, but in the spring of 1946 a book on the same theme, Mary Jane Ward's *The Snake Pit*, was seized upon by the Book-of-the-Month Club, the *Reader's Digest*, and Hollywood.

In the same season the ten-thousand-dollar Harper prize was awarded to Jo Sinclair's *Wasteland*, a full-dress account of a psychoanalysis, and the novel was made a selection of the Book Find Club. Another, less popular, novel, Ethel Sexton's *Count Me among the Living*, traced the progress of a neurosis from childhood to the insane asylum. An ingenious mystery story, *The Horizontal Man* by Helen Eustis, relied on schizophrenia for its denouement. And in half a dozen of the spring's novels there were striking pathological overtones.

Some critics maintain that the great majority of characters in contemporary fiction are pathological, and there is

¹ Author of the *Great Tradition*, *Only One Storm*, etc.

ground for their charge. But what distinguishes *The Lost Weekend*, *The Snake Pit*, and *Wasteland*—to select the three novels that most clearly make the point—is the fact that they deal deliberately and directly with pathological states. Alcoholism, the treatment of mental disease, and psychoanalysis are not topics they incidentally touch upon; these matters are their themes.

II

Of course, there is nothing new in writing about psychological abnormalities. "Do you suppose," George Lyman Kittredge used to ask indignantly, "that Shakespeare didn't know what an inferiority complex was?" Almost anyone will grant that Shakespeare was aware of many varieties of human behavior for which labels have been invented only in recent decades, and a contemporary psychiatrist, Dr. Frederick Wertham, goes so far as to say that *Hamlet* gives a precise account of a peculiar pathological state that he has named the catathymic crisis. Psychopathological phenomena have always been among the data of the creative mind, as Freud himself recognized when he drew some of his terminology from Greek tragedy.

Even authors who would have shrunk from open discussion of such sordid subjects could not fail to take account in their fiction of deviations from the norm. One interesting result of our own preoccupation with abnormalities is the re-examination of earlier writers. Edmund Wilson, for instance, has discovered in Dickens a passionate concern with types of mentality whose existence the Victorian novelist and his readers would have denied if they had been forced to name and describe them. We re-read *Great Expectations*, or *Edwin Drood*, and wonder how our grandparents could

have been so blind to their implications; but we make a serious mistake if we assume that Dickens' contemporaries did not respond to his symbolism merely because they could not or would not interpret it.

Yet if it is fatuous to suppose that ours is the first generation to be aware of maladjustments, complexes, neuroses, psychoses, and the rest, it would be equally wrong to believe that nothing has changed in the last fifty years. There have been two changes: an increase in mental disease and the creation of a new vocabulary for discussing it.

Some people say that there merely seems to be an increase in mental disease because of improvements in diagnosis, and quite probably the increase is less than it appears to be; but there is plenty of evidence that more and more people are finding themselves inadequate to the demands of the civilization in which they live. Not only the orthodox Freudians but also those psychiatrists who have ventured to revise the master find the roots of maladjustment in the experiences of early childhood, and one of the most solid achievements of psychology is this new awareness of the seriousness of the shocks that come with the first conflicts between the individual and his social environment. Yet few psychologists today assert that character is rigidly determined by the events of the first year or two of life. If anything is determined, it is simply the individual's breaking-point, the point at which he can no longer stand up to the demands of his society. When social pressure rises, the breaking-points of more and more individuals are reached, and the pressure has been rising steadily in our industrial society. Man, after living for hundreds of thousands of years in small groups, is now forced to take nothing less than the world itself as

his organizational unit. Revolutions in his physical mode of existence, such as formerly took place once in a century or a millennium, now occur every few years. And at the same time his increasing control over his physical environment is balanced—and, at least for the present, outweighed—by his defenselessness against social forces. Both tension and insecurity rise in a great wave, and it is no wonder that many are engulfed.

The new vocabulary is important, too. One need not suppose that the Freudians have "explained" mental disorder once and for all, but they have created a way of talking about it, one that has pretty well proved its superiority not only to theological and moralistic modes of discussion but also to the empirical psychiatry of the late nineteenth century. Sharp distinctions between normality and abnormality have been broken down, and phenomena that once seemed as mysterious as they were alarming have been fitted into the broad patterns of human behavior. Where such words as "insanity" and "madness" had become a barrier to communication, the new terms make some degree of precision possible. Laymen may be as careless with "neurotic" as they once were with "mad," but two doctors can be reasonably sure that they mean the same thing when they speak of a neurosis. As for literary people, they were notoriously unscientific in their first intoxication with the lovely new words, but some of them soon began to see that here were tools for them to use.

III

Freudianism has been so much in the air for the last twenty-five or thirty years that few intellectuals can have wholly escaped its influence, and one is a little skeptical when it is said that Wil-

liam Faulkner, for example, knew nothing of Freud when he began to write. But whether a writer is versed in psychological theory or not, he must depend primarily on experience and observation. James Joyce's debt to Freud was not inconsiderable, and yet Freudian psychology merely confirmed and extended insights that were his own. D. H. Lawrence took from Jung only what served his purpose, and as often as not he modified what he took.

After all, the psychiatrist and the writer regard pathological states in rather different ways. The psychiatrist, of whatever school, is interested in them for their own sake, in their causes and especially in their cure, whereas the artist as a general rule is no more directly concerned with mental than with physical disease. Whatever one may think of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, it is not to be described as a book about an idiot. There was a time when I felt that Faulkner's preoccupation with abnormality might be the result of a not wholly creditable desire to shock his readers, but later work has convinced me that his aims are by no means frivolous. In his revealing introduction to *The Portable Faulkner*, Malcolm Cowley describes Faulkner's double labor: "First, to invent a Mississippi county that was like a mythical kingdom, but was complete and living in all its details; second, to make the story of Yoknapatawpha County stand as a parable or legend of all the Deep South." Even the least of his novels—*Sanctuary*, say, or *Pylon*—is part of a broad study of social decay. To describe his idiots, gangsters, nymphomaniacs, murderers, and suicides as symbols would be unjust to his powers as a writer of fiction, for these creatures exist in themselves and do not merely represent something else; but if one asks why

he bothers to portray them, the answer is to be found in his vision of the disintegration of a culture.

Faulkner is only one of many contemporary novelists who see in the maladjustments of individuals a kind of significance that lies outside the range of the professional psychologist. Perceiving all about them signs of both individual and social disintegration, artists are more interested in the symbolic than in the logical connection between the two. Thus it happens that a writer who formally rejects the whole Freudian Weltanschauung may nevertheless occupy himself with the kind of phenomena that the psychoanalyst claims as his province. T. S. Eliot, for instance, or Evelyn Waugh or Graham Greene may speak of absolute evil when a Freudian would refer to a neurosis or psychosis, but in its impact their work is strikingly like that of avowed believers in psychoanalytic theory.

Because the line between normality and abnormality cannot be sharply drawn, it is not always easy to say whether or not a novelist is consciously invading the realms of psychopathology. One reviewer, I recall, insisted vehemently—perhaps too vehemently—that there was no suggestion of abnormality in William Maxwell's *The Folded Leaf*. Other critics held that the book drew much of its poignance from Mr. Maxwell's intimations of a sexual element, however repressed and misunderstood, in Lymie's feeling for Spud, and that Lymie's attempted suicide brought the subject matter well within the field of psychiatry. Disagreement is possible because Mr. Maxwell, in his adroit and delicate way, shows as inseparably blended the qualities that a psychologist would isolate and label normal or abnormal.

There are many recent novels that

cannot be easily classified and yet add to the impression that there is widespread concern with the less healthy aspects of the human mind. No one, for instance, would call Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* a study of abnormal psychology, but the mind of the child who is the leading character does not function as children's minds were once supposed to do, and the mood of the *novella* is often dark and even sinister. Josephine Johnson in *Wildwood* also writes about a child, and what makes her story so cruelly moving is the fact that the heroine would be capable of a normal life if she were given a chance; but that is exactly what is denied her, and the portrayal of her foster-parents constantly suggests the fearful depths that can lie below the semblance of an orderly life. Ernest Brace's *The Buried Stream* seems to be in large part the familiar story of a successful businessman who is disillusioned with his business and his wife, but the account of the hero's breakdown owes much to Freudian insights, even though Mr. Brace chose not to pursue them for any inconvenient distance.

Without going further, we can admit that a good proportion of modern novels are concerned with characters whose behavior would seem highly significant to a psychiatrist. Sometimes the novelists seem largely unaware of what they are doing, but many and perhaps most know perfectly well. We must also admit that many of the novelists themselves are by no means stable characters, as they would willingly confess. Indeed, in certain sections of the advance guard "normal" is used only as a term of denigration. One does not have to be a philistine to believe that this is not a satisfactory situation, but only a philistine is likely to feel that the problem can be solved by damning modern literature.

IV

It is against this background that we must examine such novels as *The Lost Weekend*, *The Snake Pit*, *Wasteland*, *Equinox*, *Count Me among the Living*, *Brainstorm*, and *Arrival and Departure*. What can be most easily said about *The Lost Weekend* and *The Snake Pit*, at least, is that their popularity has made them important documents in the education of the public. The former, thanks to the film version, must have convinced large numbers of people that alcoholism is something other than a moral problem. The latter has called attention to the inadequacies of even our better institutions for the mentally ailing and has helped readers to understand that "insanity" is neither more disgraceful nor more remote from ordinary experience than, say, tuberculosis. Miss Ward has admitted that *The Snake Pit* is based on personal experience, and though Mr. Jackson has not been so candid, internal evidence suggests that much of *The Lost Weekend* is autobiographical. In a sense, then, these books belong to a tradition that stretches from Beer's *Mind That Found Itself* to Seabrook's *Asylum*, and, like the avowed autobiographies, the novels have great educational value.

If, however, their principal importance is nonliterary, this does not mean that they are without literary merit, for both Miss Ward and Mr. Jackson have mastered a series of difficult problems. Both novels are written in the third person, but the point of view in each is that of the central—and afflicted—character. Each, in other words, deals with its experience from inside. Miss Ward does not try to show the causes of Virginia's condition, and Mr. Jackson merely suggests—in a series of flashbacks—some of the roots of Don's alcoholism. But al-

though the authors' methods prevent them from going deeply into causes, their concentration on the pathological state of mind as it exists is justified by the vividness they achieve. If ever one can speak of sharing an experience, it is after reading these books.

Carlton Brown's *Brainstorm*, as I have already said, is less successful than *The Snake Pit*, and that may be because it is not autobiographical but is based on what happened to another person as observed by Mr. Brown and reported to him. Some passages do seem to be cooked up, whereas everything in *The Snake Pit* is real. *Count Me among the Living* is a more ambitious novel than *The Snake Pit*, for it tries to show the roots of maladjustment in early childhood experiences and to follow a character step by step to the actual moment of collapse, but the achievement is not impressive. One cannot be sure, however, that the book fails because of lack of knowledge and insight, as *Brainstorm* does, for the telling of the story is clumsy, and Miss Sexton does not make the most of such insights as she has.

Allan Seager's *Equinox*, a few seasons ago, introduced a macabre and preposterous psychoanalyst and involved him in an absurdly melodramatic plot. The analyst in Jo Sinclair's *Wasteland* is merely a voice, but at least he is a worthy representative of his profession. Miss Sinclair's description of the analytic process is sympathetic, intelligent, and revealing to the reader, though the necessities of the novel form force her to simplify it and to produce somewhat too pat a cure. As for the novel as a novel, the chief question concerns the use of a psychoanalysis as a way of telling a story. It is a narrative method that inevitably involves some repetition, but Miss Sinclair does succeed in placing be-

fore the reader a set of family relationships and the predicaments of a minority group.

Wasteland raises the perennial problem of psychoanalysis and social change. Miss Sinclair's spokesman and alter ego is Debbie, the hero's sister, and Debbie is, or, at any rate, has been, something of a radical, but Jake is led by his analyst to accept the world as it exists, and the moral seems to be that social change is unnecessary. It was to precisely this dilemma that Arthur Koestler addressed himself three years ago in *Arrival and Departure*. His hero, too, goes through an analysis—an even more stylized analysis, it may be said in passing, than that described in *Wasteland*—but refuses to accept the conclusions that the analyst draws. Even though Peter, the hero, is compelled to admit that his radicalism grew out of childhood revolt against his father, he still thinks the world needs changing. Unable to deny that reason is on the analyst's side, he falls back on convictions that seem to him deeper than reason and returns to the struggle.

V

Wasteland and *Arrival and Departure*, between them, suggest that the novelist cannot long absent himself from problems of value. I do not want to seem to depreciate *The Lost Weekend* and *The Snake Pit*, for each of them extends our awareness by its vivid re-creation of an experience, but I doubt whether such books are in the main literary stream, and I am sure that the authors cannot and will not want to go on doing that sort of thing. The fact that the experiences are described from within, no

matter how well they are described, means that they cannot be evaluated, which means in turn that the broader and more interesting implications are left unexplored. What is done in these books was worth doing, but it does not need to be done again.

But if there is a limit to our interest in novels that describe specific pathological states, that does not mean that psychopathology has no place in fiction. So long as writers see instances of mental disorder all about them, so long as they are conscious of anxieties and conflicts within themselves, so long as society shows symptoms of disease, the disordered mind will play a part in our literature. Looking at the world about us, one can only conclude that its part will be more rather than less prominent in the immediate future.

P-N fiction, then, is a sign of the times. In thinking about it, we need to bear in mind certain elementary distinctions with regard to the nature of literature. In the first place, the novel has always been used as a means of conveying information, and, whatever the aesthetes may say, this is a legitimate function. On the other hand, novels cannot serve as a substitute for textbooks and scientific treatises. Moreover, the conveying of information is a secondary function of literature. When the great psychologists have turned to literature, as most of them have, it has not been for the sake of information but for the sake of those insights that are the peculiar endowment of the artist. The man of letters, in other words, has his own kind of authority, and whether he writes what we have called P-N fiction or not, that is what counts.

W. Somerset Maugham: Theme and Variations

WOODBURN O. ROSS¹

FEW contemporary authors have been praised as highly and condemned as completely as has W. Somerset Maugham. A recent critic enthusiastically says that today he is "perhaps the most creative talent in the field of the English novel." Another, while granting Maugham's talent, suggests that sinister influences have vitiated his abilities, a suggestion with which a great many competent readers, I think, would agree. "It is indisputable," he writes, "that Mr. Maugham, despite the authorship of one novel of almost universal appeal, ceased some time ago to be a force and was bought, as it were. . . . What metamorphosis took place? What happened? Were his desires worldly from the start; was he fired originally with no artist's longing to see and make, but with an earthling's lust to dine well and glitter? Or was a man of genius, a virgin heart, seduced by the great world of riches and power?"

Now I propose to attempt at least to suggest the reasons for, if not to reconcile, opinions as widely different as these and, at the same time, to offer a less impetuous and more carefully substantiated criticism of Maugham's fictional works. Fundamentally, I want to describe his basic ideas and their development and then to offer some comments concerning their value. I know that to approach his work from the point of view of its intellectual content rather than of

its entertainment value is to violate his own request. But it is certainly an unreasonable request, and I am afraid that it is a defensive one. In the case of any novelist, a discussion of the materials which he abstracts from life and of the point of view which he uses them to illustrate forms an important part of the criticism of his work. The man who wrote *Of Human Bondage*, a novel which traces the development of the philosophy of its leading character, can hope even less than most to escape such discussion.

I

Maugham's early fiction is little known; and this fact, I think, is responsible for a failure on the part of many of his readers to estimate properly his later artistic achievements.

The basic situations which were to become highly important in Maugham's work appeared initially in the second of his novels, *The Making of a Saint*, published in 1898. This book is an unsuccessful historical novel, which tells the story of an abortive revolution in a late-fifteenth-century Italian city-state. Naturally, however, a love story is woven into the plot, which otherwise concerns itself with politics; and it is the love story which contains the seeds of Maugham's future development. A young man named Filippo Brandolini (notice the early appearance of Philip Carey's Christian name) falls in love with a profligate widow named Giulia dall'Aste. Her profligacy is not obvious; she is

¹ Department of English, Wayne University; editor of *Middle English Sermons* (Early English Text Society, No. 209).

beautiful and appears innocent and fragile. In the beginning Filippo accepts her at her face value and falls deeply in love with her. Presently he discovers what she is, but he cannot shake off his attachment.

This rather simple situation has three elements in it which deserve attention. In the first place, Giulia appears to be one thing and actually is something quite different; second, Filippo is tormented by a passion which he cannot conquer; and, third, knowledge of the true nature of his beloved does not free him from his enslavement. These three qualities of characters in *The Making of a Saint* may seem commonplace and insignificant; yet, their nakedness hidden by constantly altered disguises, they were destined to inspire a large part—the most important part—of the work of Somerset Maugham and eventually to form the foundation for one of the most persuasive statements of a philosophy which has appeared in recent English fiction.

Their first change of wardrobe occurred in Maugham's next novel, *Mrs. Craddock*, finally published in 1902. Bertha Ley falls in love with Edward Craddock, a tenant on her estate, and marries him in spite of the objections of her friends. They are utterly unadapted to each other. Bertha is ardent, Edward cold. She is imaginative and rather intellectual; he is pedestrian, even stupid. But for years her perception of his true qualities does nothing to free her from her passion for him. Before the end, however, she falls in love with a young cousin of hers named Gerald Vaudrey. He is an innocent-looking young rake. In Maugham's words: "She was struck by the contrast between his innocent appearance and his shocking past." Basically, the peculiar problems which the

characters confront are the same as those in the earlier book. Edward and Gerald together take the place of Giulia, and Bertha is the transformation of Filippo.

The Merry-Go-Round, published in 1904, derives its name from the fact that it is made up of several plots. In one of these a Mrs. Castillyon falls in love with a pleasant, good-looking scoundrel named Reginald Barlow-Bassett; knowledge of his actual character does not save her. In another, one Bella Langton, daughter of the Dean of Tercanbury, finds herself in love with a banker's clerk named Herbert Field, who is about twenty years her junior. Again knowledge of the unsuitability of the beloved offers no refuge from the tempest of passion. But, in this instance, as he was also to do later, Maugham suddenly and refreshingly reverses his situation. Giulia, Edward, and Gerald were all deceptive in that they looked satisfactory and proved the opposite. Here Herbert Field appears to be the wrong man for Bella Langton and turns out to be quite all right. The marriage is a success, though Field presently dies.

Yet another part of *The Merry-Go-Round* is an early experiment with a portion of the Mildred-Philip situation in *Of Human Bondage*, though, as a matter of fact, not the first experiment with it. In 1898 Maugham had written a play, finally produced in 1903, which made use of the same characters, the same situations, and even some of the same speeches as he was to incorporate into this part of *The Merry-Go-Round*. The two versions of the story do not differ in any important particulars. Basil Kent, a young man of intelligence and education, falls in love with a barmaid named Jenny Bush. She jilts a previous suitor and accepts Basil's attentions, partly because she considers him such a perfect

gentleman. Shortly afterward she becomes pregnant, and as a man of honor Basil marries her. The child dies. They are themselves thoroughly incompatible, and their marriage ends with Jenny's suicide. The point of the play and of the narrative version of the story is that Basil, by attempting to live up to the demands of society after Jenny became pregnant, destroyed her. She wanted with all her heart to be a suitable wife to him and simply couldn't. It might have been better, thinks Maugham, if he had left her to bear the illegitimate child and to marry a man of her own class. But he makes his point by showing human beings again in the grasp of a passion from which at least one of them is powerless to escape.

These same situations, which were becoming Maugham's conventional reflections of human life, appear in *The Explorer*, published in 1907, though they are not very prominent there, and I shall not try the reader's patience by reciting a précis of the plot. I do wish, however, to glance briefly here at one more of these early novels, *The Magician*, which was published in the next year, 1908.

It is the merest potboiler, a melodramatic tale of magic; but, even so, it is important as showing the extent to which Maugham's conventional treatment of characters had by now come to control his mind. For even here he uses the same devices. Arthur Burdon, a brilliant young physician, is deeply in love with his ward, Margaret Dauncey. He offends a man named Oliver Haddo, a fellow who is repulsive in mind and body but, as it turns out, a magician. Haddo secures revenge by practicing his black arts on Margaret, who deserts her beloved Arthur and runs away with Haddo. She finds him utterly repellent,

but his magic is too strong for her and she cannot break away, even when she knows he is plotting her death. It is clearly the same old story, except that this time the tie that binds the victim is magic, whereas previously it has been the character's own passions.

It may strike a reader as curious that, in sketching the situations which Maugham exploited in his early works, I have referred to but one out of half-a-score of plays which he wrote before *Of Human Bondage*. The fact is, however, that most of them are practically devoid of serious content. Only one, *Loaves and Fishes*, which, though it was not produced until 1911, he wrote in 1902 and turned into a novel called *The Bishop's Apron* in 1906, deals with a theme which had sufficient importance in his eyes to cause him to use it several times. It is concerned with the venality of the clergy. The truth appears to be that when he wrote his plays, Maugham was always principally concerned with their audience-appeal and that the result of this concern was carefully constructed but easily grasped plots and witty, epigrammatic dialogue. A kind of shallow but mordant cynicism added sauce to his plays and doubtless gave him among theatergoers a reputation for insight which a reading of the plays does not support. Later, during and after the first World War, his dramatic work gained somewhat in weight. *Our Betters* (1915), *The Circle* (1921), and *The Sacred Flame* (1928), for instance, all present credible characters and deal with situations of more or less universal interest. But, in general, the plays are not as substantial as the novels because their subjects did not impinge significantly upon their author's most absorbing concerns with life and the most important judgments which he made about it.

II

I do not know why the situations which are repeated so often in Maugham's novels inspired his imagination. Perhaps some important experiences in his own life led him to dwell on them. If such is the case, the events which animated him must have occurred very early, for they are reflected almost from the beginning of his career as a writer. Or perhaps he invented his formula. But in any event, as I have said, the formula contained important literary potentialities. On the surface, the dramatic possibilities inherent in the revelation of a character's actual qualities, when all the world has assumed him to be different from what he really is, are obvious—even to the authors of detective stories. And, similarly, the struggles of a person to extricate himself with his right hand from snares which his own left hand has set are bound to make compelling reading if handled with reasonable skill. But this is not all. There is in this situation which Maugham developed an implication—an implication concerning the very nature of the immediate motivation of all human actions. If a person rationally wills to choose one course of action but is compelled by some perhaps obscure part of his nature to follow another, then his rational will is not free. And if the person who struggles vainly against the promptings arising from the dark, mysterious, and unconscious depths of his own nature is a valid type of humanity, then humanity is not free to make rationally governed choices but is psychologically in bondage.

The notion that human beings are in such bondage is at least implicit in much of Maugham's early work. Bertha Craddock recognizes and deplors the fact that her love for Edward costs her

much of her freedom. Mrs. Castillyon in *The Merry-Go-Round* protests that she is powerless to protect herself from the dissolute Reginald. But in both these books Maugham chooses to deal with the facts of conduct rather than with implications to be drawn concerning its motivation. His characters are in bondage, but their servitude is not a condition which principally attracts the attention of their creator.

The Hero, published in 1901 though written after *Mrs. Craddock*, is the early work of Maugham which comes closest to dealing directly with human freedom or, rather, with the lack of it. For the first time Maugham pays attention to the frustrating influences of environment as well as to those of an individual's irrational desires. A young British officer returning from service in the army finds that he does not love and cannot marry the girl who has waited patiently as his fiancée for five years. On the other hand, he is tormented by lust for the former wife of a brother officer. At first his old acquaintances receive him back with enthusiasm as a hero, but a little later they turn against him heartlessly when it becomes known that he cannot go through with the projected marriage. And he, for his part, seasoned by his years in the army, finds them stupid and dull. In the end he kills himself because he cannot have freedom of action. The book might have been a masterpiece if Maugham had stuck to the single theme of this young officer's tragic search for freedom. But Maugham is out to attack all sorts of conventional standards of morality and dissipates his energies in various channels. He pays off a stupid and superficial vicar and his wife in great style. He avers that lust, not chastity, is holy. He even has a good word to say for the

doctrine that might makes right. All in all, the book is a callow performance, but it is significant among Maugham's works for its implied determinism.

Nothing that Maugham had written up to 1912 gave him any substantial claim to fame. He had exploited the flashy possibilities of his conventional theme and at the same time had disported himself by attacking the conventions of others. He had not been blind to the deeper implications of his theme, but he had never dealt with them adequately. In short, he had gone through a fifteen-year apprenticeship, which prepared him to write a masterpiece on a single subject.

In 1912 he sat down to write that masterpiece, *Of Human Bondage*. He says that he had tried to write the book back in 1898; but it is fortunate that he failed and waited until he could bring long experience to bear upon its composition.

Anyone who has read it will of course recognize at once that it is basically a decking-out in new garb of the situations which he had used so often before. But in *Of Human Bondage* these situations grow far more complex and significant than they were when they originally appeared in *The Making of a Saint*. Maugham develops his formula in mature and genuinely imaginative fashion. Mildred Rogers is much more than a voluptuous siren who appears innocent. She is anemic and not obviously a woman of much physical attraction, a fact which makes Philip's devotion to her the more striking. She is stupid and vulgar. To Philip she appears to have no sensuality. But this appearance is false, for men who chance to be as vulgar as she are able to arouse powerful passions within her. She is herself to some extent in bondage to her passions. Philip, how-

ever, is the character whose lack of freedom is most impressive. He loves Mildred, in spite of her repulsive vulgarity, for some reason too mysterious for him to comprehend. Like Filippo Brandolini, he understands perfectly the character of his beloved, but knowledge is of no avail against the cravings of his soul. In Fanny Price, the unsuccessful artist whom Philip meets in Paris, Maugham creates a new kind of character, in bondage to a passion which I believe he had never described before, the passion to paint. Her desires are as irrational as Philip's, because she has no ability at all; but the evident fact that she cannot paint does nothing to slake her need for that kind of expression.

Considered as a whole, the book is great, I think, because Maugham for the first time brings into clear focus the deterministic implications of his formula and because he successfully projects his psychological determinism against the background of a mechanistic, naturalistic interpretation of life. The novel is thus principally concerned not with events but with a philosophy. Unlike *The Hero*, it is a thoroughly unified work. Each major episode, beginning with Philip Carey's early discovery of the importance of his physical limitations, puts another bar across the windows of human freedom. Philip loses faith in the religion which preaches free will; he learns that his own intense desire to paint does not confer upon him the requisite ability; he loves Mildred; he feels the pinch of poverty; and he finally comes to see the development of life as the unfolding of a pattern which has no significance but which may by chance prove to be aesthetically pleasing.

Maugham not only sees clearly what he wants to say, but he says it cannily. As he attempts to argue the position of

the determinist, he directs at Philip the inferences which he draws from various situations and seeks to convince the reader by first convincing his hero.

The fact that *Of Human Bondage* is, to a considerable extent, autobiographical is frequently mentioned by critics of this work and is, of course, indisputable, regardless of whether the Mildred episode has any basis in fact. But to consider it as fictionalized autobiography is to make it appear a much more immediate and direct reflection of experience than it is. Theodore Dreiser, for instance, in his excellent review of the book which appeared in *The New Republic*, seems to regard it as a kind of spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It is, of course, nothing of the sort, as this discussion has shown. It is calculated and artificial; but the calculation which produced it was born of experience in writing and the artifice is the artifice which creates the illusion of reality.

III

Of Human Bondage was not at all a work of great promise. It was a fulfillment of a promise made fifteen years before. From the beginning Maugham had seen human beings in a certain way, and he had now achieved, I think, the most perfect expression of his insight of which he was capable. But, though the play was over, the curtain refused to come down. Maugham was a professional writer, and a professional writer must keep on writing. His attitudes, however, did not change, except in one respect which I shall mention presently, and he did not develop new, significant ramifications of his ideas to which he must give expression. For the constancy of his opinions we have not only the evidence of his fictional works but also that of his autobiographical *The Summing*

Up, published in 1938. Comparing his views then with those which he held when he was a student in St. Thomas' Hospital in the 1890's, he explicitly says: "The experience of all the years that have followed has only confirmed the observations on human nature that I made, not deliberately, for I was too young, but unconsciously . . . in the wards of St. Thomas's. . . . I have seen men since as I saw them then, and thus I have shown them."

And the result? He has constantly repeated himself and has written nothing since which approaches the quality of his great work. But the answer to the charge that he sold himself out is that, on the contrary, he wrote himself out. Let us glance at some of his postwar efforts. *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), his next novel, was apparently inspired by the life of Gauguin, but the result is pure Maugham. Strickland, the central character, is consumed by a passion to paint. He is a modification of Fanny Price and of another artist who appears in *Of Human Bondage*. Even the old formula of the unworthy beloved recognized as unworthy by the enslaved lover appears again in the Strickland-Blanche Stroeve situation. *The Painted Veil* (1925) describes the powerlessness of a woman to love a worthy man or to resist her desires for an unworthy one. *Cakes and Ale* (1930) conforms less to the pattern. Yet Rosie Driffield, the most striking character of the book, is interesting principally because of her surprising ability to be sexually promiscuous and at the same time remain a perfectly self-possessed, integrated character. The world expects one set of actions from her and gets another. In *The Narrow Corner* (1932), Maugham remains preoccupied with the contradictions which can exist within characters. The book discusses, among

other matters, the qualities of Captain Nichols, who is a thief, an all-round scoundrel, a more than competent sailor, and a potential hero; and of Louise Frith, a virtuous girl, a virgin, who gives herself almost instantly to a stranger. *Theatre* (1937) concerns the uncontrollable love of a great actress for an inconsequential young man many years her junior. *Christmas Holiday* (1939) presents a virtuous prostitute and describes her love for a kleptomaniac, homicidal husband. *Up at a Villa* (1940) and *The Hour before the Dawn* (1942) deal with the same old themes but, as books, are completely unimportant.

Maugham's latest book,² *The Razor's Edge* (1944), however, though built around the usual themes, presents the first significant modification of them which he has effected since he created Fanny Price and Charles Strickland. The overwhelming desire of Larry Darrell, the central character, is not to win love or to paint but to find God. Though the book is not a masterpiece, it does seem to offer evidence that Maugham writes about what he considers important. For Larry's most striking quality is his goodness; and in *The Summing Up* Maugham says that, though he once regarded the creation of beauty as the most suitable end of human action, he now considers the good more important than the beautiful.

IV

Though Maugham published a collection of unimportant short stories called *Orientalisms* in 1899, the bulk of his extensive work in this form falls in the period of his life during which his novels were largely filled with repetitions of the themes to which he had given what

should have been final expression in *Of Human Bondage*. It is, therefore, no surprise to find that his stories—or those of them which pretend to make any serious comment upon life—likewise reflect these themes.

For example, in "Rain" a missionary persecutes a prostitute until suddenly a taste for forbidden fruit which no one suspected him of entertaining gets the better of him. "The Letter" is the story of a woman who for years had appeared invulnerable to passion, unusually self-controlled, almost serene, but who all the while had been devoted to a lover and who, when he deserted her, killed him. "The Round Dozen" concerns a celebrated bigamist who wins as his twelfth wife a very conservative spinster. "The Human Element" describes a beautiful, vivacious, and cultivated young Englishwoman, who, despite the fact that some of the most eligible men in England found her attractive, maintained from her girlhood an adulterous connection with her chauffeur. "The Vessel of Wrath" contains, roughly, a repetition of the circumstances of "Rain," with a female missionary playing the role of the reformer.

On the whole, critics have not been too highly impressed by Maugham's short stories. The reason is perhaps inherent in the very themes which he uses. If he is to exhibit unexpected aspects of the conduct of human beings who are being gnawed upon by some passion, the natural denouement of his stories is the performance of a surprising act or the revelation of some shocking quality of the soul. The climax of "The Letter," for instance, is the revelation that Leslie Crosby's life has been adulterous almost from the beginning of her marriage. But it is one thing to introduce at the end of a story a surprising act which illuminates

² This article was written before the publication of the inconsequential *Then and Now*.

all that has gone before; it is quite another to introduce one which denies all that has gone before. In the latter case, it is likely not to be the interpretation of character but sheer surprise which most impresses the reader. And sheer surprise does not afford adequate intellectual stimulation; it merely represents a source of interest and excitement. This difficulty, it seems to me, is one from which Maugham can hardly escape in a short story. In a novel the surprising aspects of a character can be uncovered, discussed, illustrated, and their effects analyzed. The whole may be made to illustrate a philosophical point of view. The result may be a stimulating comment upon some aspect of life. But in a short story, long discussion and repeated illustration are impossible. If the denouement is a surprising contradiction of the rest of the narrative, then mere surprise is the principal result of reading the story. And I believe that Maugham's stories suffer from this overemphasis upon surprise to which he is driven and suffer from it despite his thought-provoking attacks upon conventional judgments and despite the general truth to life of his characterizations.

V

As one attempts to formulate judgments concerning Maugham's work as a whole, one is struck above all by its limited range. It is restricted both in breadth and in depth.

It is restricted in breadth. The basic problem which he raises, when he raises problems, is that of the motivation of human choices. His solution, sometimes presented more or less tentatively, is that of the determinist; men choose what they do because they must. This kind of answer, though important—it denies free will—leaves altogether too

much unsaid. When Maugham finds the ultimate causes of human choices to lie in the nature of things, he is thinking of the causative aspects of whole, vague, interacting psychological and environmental complexes. He is never specific. Concerning profound causes of particular psychological states in his characters he has nothing to say. And these vague complexes which in a sense are ultimate causes find expression in his works only in a very narrow range of actions. As we have seen, he uses countless modifications of a set formula; and, until lately, he has applied that formula principally to certain kinds of sexual frustrations or to needs for creative expression in the arts. How much of the broad human scene is omitted is evident.

A result of this narrow limitation of the area to which he restricts the activities of his characters is that the effect of his very considerable versatility in character drawing is seriously vitiated. Mr. Richard A. Cordell, the author of one of the two book-length studies of Maugham in English, emphasizes the fact that Maugham has created a wide variety of characters. He says, for instance, "The women of Somerset Maugham's novels are highly individualized. In the characterizations of Liza, Bertha Ley, Mildred, Blanche Stroeve, Kitty Fane, Rosie Driffield, Louise Frith, and Julia Lambert he does not repeat himself." But Mr. Cordell does not carry his discussion far enough. It is true that these women are separate individuals; they differ from one another in intelligence, in taste, in ability, in background, and in appearance. But such differences may have genuine literary significance only when they permit an author to illustrate various aspects of life; and Maugham uses all these characters to illustrate virtually the same aspect. The essential

problem of these women is the same—to find some satisfactory solution to their sexual needs. Their solutions have this in common: each gives herself to a lover who, for one reason or another, is unsuitable for her. If Cordell wished to emphasize the diversity of character of Maugham's women, he would have done well to include Fanny Price in the group. She is different from all the rest; in her Maugham escapes in part from the constricting influence of his formula and is successful in illustrating a new aspect of life. But there are very few of his important feminine characters of whom this can be said. The same kind of criticism, of course, can be made concerning his men.

Just as Maugham's important comments upon life are limited in area, they are limited in depth. I have said that even in his most serious moments he is not concerned with profound causes of the psychological states of his characters. I do not mean that he does not provide adequate motivation for particular acts. He does. But he neglects what lies behind the immediate motive.

It is characteristic of his work that the responses of his characters are always extreme, even perverse. Philip's love for Mildred, Blanche's love for Strickland, and Strickland's desire to paint, all go beyond any reason. It is difficult to believe that the nineteenth century would have accepted these characters just as they are drawn. The twentieth century, I think, owes its willingness to believe in them to Sigmund Freud and his successors, who have directed attention to a wide variety of perverse responses and explained them by reference to the unconscious mind. Philip Carey, Charles Strickland, Rosie Driffield, and Robert Berger are all good Freudian characters, except that the Freudian explanation of

their conduct is missing. Why does Philip Carey love Mildred? Critics frequently answer the question by vague references to an alleged feeling of inferiority caused by his club foot. I think, however, that M. Paul Dottin is much nearer the mark when he says that Philip hates himself and that his love for Mildred is an attempt at self-annihilation. But why should he hate himself? Or, for that matter, what is the specific evidence in *Of Human Bondage* that there is any relationship between his affection for Mildred and his club foot? The fact is that Philip's response to her is left unmotivated, as are the extreme reactions of all Maugham's characters.

In other words, when it comes to dealing with basic psychological states, Maugham does not interpret; he reports. He gives his readers no genuine insight into the fundamental—and consequently the most interesting and important—reasons for his characters' conduct. This is not to say that Maugham is merely a reporter. But the interpretation of life which he offers is abstracted from unaccountable, or unaccounted-for, patterns of behavior. His vision does not extend far beyond his formula.

Maugham has sometimes been spoken of as having been unusually successful in recording characteristic features of twentieth-century life—indeed, as having helped in some slight measure to create them. But, after one notices how repetitious he is and how restricted his serious interests have been, must not one conclude that he has failed to give himself sufficient scope to interpret much that is peculiar to our changing culture? Of the twentieth-century social or political manifestations of materialism he says nothing; the problems posed by the anti-intellectual neoromantics apparently do not interest him. His basic philosophy is

the conventional one of the brash, mechanistic nineteenth-century naturalists. It seems to me that one has but to mention the names of D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, and John Dos Passos to realize how far Maugham is in spirit from authors who have given literary expression to crucial problems peculiar to the twentieth century. He has been described as a revolutionist. Actually he is a sheep in wolf's clothing. It is almost fair to say that he has been revolutionary only in his opinions on the incidence and importance of adultery.

VI

Much of what I have written in the latter part of this paper is likely to appear disparaging. And certainly I have not dealt with some excellent qualities which Maugham displays—an unusual directness and simplicity of utterance and an extraordinary ability to articulate the parts of a plot and build them up to a dramatic climax. He pleases his readers. He interests them and, I feel sure, arouses a sense that what he is saying is important. But these are all

matters which have been discussed repeatedly by critics of Maugham's work, and, further, they lie outside the area which I have been attempting to explore.

I have been principally concerned with isolating and describing the formula in terms of which Maugham has seen human life and with showing the influence which it has had upon his work. I think that to understand the development of his use of the formula is to understand a great deal about Maugham. His basic strength is shown by the remarkably persuasive and integrated expression of his formula which he achieved in *Of Human Bondage*. But his weakness was predicted by his long inability to bring it into satisfactory focus and is demonstrated by his subsequent incapacity to transcend it and enlarge his view of life. It is not primarily a facile willingness to meet the demands of the vulgar but rather an inability to expand the insights of his youth which is responsible for the dissatisfaction which many intelligent readers feel with his work. He has never escaped the young man who studied medicine at St. Thomas' Hospital in the late nineteenth century.

Folklore in American Literature

ERNEST E. LEISY^{*}

AMERICAN literature, as we too commonly think of it, has had little to do with popular lore. Most of it appears to have been based on an English, i.e., a colonial, tradition. Yet more of our authors than we perhaps realize have felt

the need of intimacy with the people—their customs, beliefs, and prejudices. They have realized, as perhaps we have not, that unless a literature possesses the folk quality it tends to become merely "precious." They have understood, as we must, that a lively sense of our American heritage is requisite to the continuity of our institutions and aids us in a more intelligent planning for the future.

Folklore, someone has said, is the

^{*} Professor of English, Southern Methodist University; author of *American Literature*, coeditor of *Major American Writers*, *The Voices of England and America*, etc. This address was delivered before the Western Folklore Conference in Denver, July, 1944.

day-dreaming of a people. Any attempt to trace this "romancing" through the course of American literature should recognize, I suppose, that there is a lore of the folk and a literature of the cultured as well as a literature of the folk and a lore of the cultured. But I do not propose to quibble over what is "folk" and what is "lore." What I wish to point out is that our major and minor American authors have made a more consistent use of the materials and motifs of the people than has been so far indicated and to draw a few conclusions therefrom.

Compared with European cultures our folk imagination is yet young. Too few years have passed for the customs of the folk to react upon the American character and to be absorbed into our literature. The variety of our climate, geography, and racial strains has stimulated material progress, but this very diversity has militated against the rapid crystallization of our folklore. Many of the songs and tales brought to America were aristocratic, or they had in them a peasant strain equally foreign to our institutions. After a period of restless thriving on imported philosophies, we acclimated ourselves to physical conditions and to the arts and ways of one another. We learned to know better the purposes of our own institutions, and gradually gave them a more adequate expression in our literature.

At the time of the Revolution there was in this country a lively sense of localized speech, of folkways, and of humor. The popular song "Yankee Doodle," the broadside ballad "Nathan Hale," and Francis Hopkinson's "The Battle of the Kegs," of course, contained folk elements. Franklin voiced in shrewd epigrams the first notes of our "folklore of capitalism," and shortly after, the comic naturalized Irishman strode through the pages of Brackenridge's

Modern Chivalry, and Cousin Jonathan trod the stage in Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*.

It is amusing now that early writers should have complained of the dearth of native material. They failed to see the riches because the genteel tradition stood in the way of a true interpretation of national experience. How could there be art where there was not gentility? One writer noted "some traditionary romance about the Indians; but a novel describing these miserable barbarians, their squaws, and papooses," he concluded, "would not be very interesting to the present race of American readers."² Philip Freneau, however, by romanticizing the red man, set the stage for Cooper and his epic of the aborigines. Washington Irving gathered traditions current along the Hudson and fixed the Knickerbocker legend there. He indulged in the comic myth-making of "Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," artfully localizing these old-world legends in a new-world setting. He exploited, in American Gothic, the demonology of "The Devil and Tom Walker," "Dolph Heyliger," and "Guests from Gibbet Island," yarns of the supernatural which were to have a numerous progeny in the 1820's and the 1830's. In "The Spectre Bridegroom," as in legends of the Alhambra and in tales of the Italian banditti, Irving used exclusively foreign lore. His mellow fancy was most thoroughly at home among the riches of old Spain in her warfare with the Moors. He could relate such stories as "The Enchanted Soldier" and "The Moor's Legacy" with the imaginative insight of a son of Andalusia.

Too infrequently Irving made use of new-world lore found on his travels. On his way to the Indian Territory in 1832

² John Bristed, *The Resources of the United States* (New York, 1818), pp. 355-56.

he picked up in Kentucky a story which he called in rough draft "Polly Holman's Wedding."³ It is a characteristic bit of folklore, foraged from some frontiersman, and, because it is not polished in the conventional manner, it the more truly evokes the freshness of that vanished time. Irving's service to his generation, he felt, was to supply it with a sense of urbanity to compensate for its rude environment. For better or for worse, he established the "genteel" tradition.

William Cullen Bryant's interest in folklore was less extensive, though it included the romantic "Song of Marion's Men," the legend of the lover's leap in "Monument Mountain," the adventures of "The Green Mountain Boys," and the account of the mound-builders in "The Prairies."

Fenimore Cooper made use of native legend in the anecdote of Enoch Crosby, the spy, and went on to the extensive lore of the Five Tribes he found in Hewitt and elsewhere. In *The Last of the Mohicans* and in the other Leatherstocking Tales he displayed the fullest variety of Indian customs and traditions, including their belief in omens, their love of baubles, their woodcraft, their oratory, their mummery, and their fierce tribal pride. Cooper outlined for the popular imagination its conception of the primitive frontier as utopia. In Leatherstocking he created our first folk hero, enlarged, to be sure, from the legend of Daniel Boone, and more of an eighteenth-century retainer in a buckskin shirt than a Davy Crockett bending the law to his needs, but acceptable at home and abroad. "Here," said Lowell, "was our new Adam of the wilderness, a figure as

poetic as that of Achilles, as ideally representative as that of Don Quixote, as romantic in its relation to our homespun and plebeian mythus as Arthur in his to the mailed and plumed cycle of chivalry."

Poe's stories seem largely without local habitation but have their share of the weird. The devil figures in five of them; the Negro appears in six, but is nowhere made real. The supernatural intrigued Poe. "Metzengerstein," with its unbanned rider, belongs with the legend of Ichabod Crane or the tale of Roushan Beg. "King Pest," with its background of the plague and its ludicrous court drinking in an undertaker's parlor, has more than a touch of the folk tale, as has "Hop-Frog," with its fantasy of orangutans at a state marriage, or that satiric folk saga, "The Devil in the Bel-fry." The hoax of "Hans Pfaall" bears a close resemblance to the tall tales of the West, and "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" is an "Arabian Night" in India. The occult appears in "The Black Cat," "The Gold Bug" reveals a folklike synthesis, and "The Raven" deals with a bird of ill omen known to all literature.

Hawthorne's preoccupation with folklore is apparent on a glance through his Notebooks. Here are found the germs of many of his tales: a mantle, the plague, a veil, mesmerism, plants with mystical potency, strange omens, mysterious deaths, the question of how to raise one's beloved to more than mortal perfection, a bloody footprint—all suggested to Hawthorne moral problems that indicated more than they revealed. The story of "Young Goodman Brown," in which the hero suspects himself of being in league with Satan at the witches' sabbath, admirably recovers the hysteria of the witchcraft period. "The Gray Champion" has the folk flavor of the well-

³ Stanley T. Williams and Ernest E. Leisy, "Polly Holman's Wedding," *Southwest Review*, XIX (July, 1934), 449-54.

known tale of King Alfred and the cakes. "The Great Stone Face" is a genuine rural legend. Ethan Brand's quest for the unpardonable sin is of the very essence of folk material, a local fantasy developed from notes on the author's holiday excursion to North Adams, where he saw the one-armed soap-maker, the dog, and the German with his diorama. *The House of the Seven Gables* he regarded as "a legend . . . from an epoch now gray in the distance . . . and bringing with it some of its legendary mist." It is evident that Hawthorne, like Poe, indulged in the rude fantasy of the pioneer but with a delicacy of perception and a style that suggested far deeper feeling.

Minor novelists drew heavily upon lore that engaged the popular fancy. James K. Paulding, in the manner of Irving, related in *Köningsmarke* the amusing story of the Long Finn; in his play, *The Lion of the West*, pictured the comic backwoodsman Davy Crockett as Colonel Nimrod Wildfire; and in *Westward Ho!* burlesqued Natty Bumppo as Ambrose Bushfield. Simms wove his fiction around the legends of Marion, the swamp fox, and around the tales of Murrell and his gang. Kennedy, Caruthers, and Cooke glamorized their beloved South with the Cavalier myth. Sylvester Judd in *Margaret* and Mrs. Stowe in her yarns of Sam Lawson converted their books into rich storehouses of New England custom and tradition. Robert M. Bird introduced to literature in *Nick of the Woods* that phantom of terror, the Jibbenainosay, and that curious creature of the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, the ring-tailed roarer, half-horse, half-alligator! His exploits were no more unbelievable than those of the Crockett of the almanacs or of the river-god Mike Fink.

There are dozens like him in Meine's *Tall Tales of the Southwest*.

Emerson and Thoreau depended more upon the wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita* than upon native lore, yet the Sage of Concord was not unaware of "the meal in the firkin, the milk in the pan, the ballad in the street." Thoreau took note of a gouging on the Washita River, as well as of Hannah Dustan and Mr. Scratch. Alek Therien, the Canadian wood-chopper, was to him "a true Homeric or Paphlagonian man." Thoreau's never-waning interest in the Indian was a part of his search for that intimate knowledge of his environment which every English poet has by inheritance.

None of our writers made more extensive use of folklore than Longfellow. His gift for folk expression displayed itself in facile ballad and metrical romance and in a remarkable variety of meters. Beginning with such folk pieces as "The Battle of Lovell's Pond" and "Lover's Rock," Longfellow went on to such ballads as "The Wreck of the Hesperus" and "The Skeleton in Armor," and reached his height in treating folk materials in *Evangeline*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

Evangeline alone introduces enough Acadian folk beliefs to make the reputation of an ordinary folklorist. Here are tales of the werewolf:

the Loup-garou in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night to
water the horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of the child
who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the
chambers of children;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in
the stable,
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut
up in a nutshell,

And of the marvelous powers of four-leaved
clover and horseshoes,
With whatsoever was writ in the lore of the
village.

In *Hiawatha* Longfellow wove together the traditions of the aborigines, in particular, the legends of the Ojibways as found in Schoolcraft and others. He used the trochaic tetrameter of the Finnish epic *Kalevala* on the ground that it came out of a like community of habits. Unfortunately, he prettified the legends by omitting most of the bloodshed and concluding with a vision of manifest destiny.

In sending an attractive Lancelot, John Alden, to woo the demure Puritan Priscilla for the bashful Captain Miles Standish, Longfellow drew upon family tradition. The well-known line, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" appeared as far back as Percy's ballad, "Will Stewart and John." In *Tales of a Wayside Inn* he used the popular tale of Paul Revere's ride; but the most noteworthy contribution in that polyglot group was the novel treatment of the Norse saga of King Olaf. Other examples of Longfellow's use of folk material are "The Leap of Roushan Beg" and "The Bells of San Blas," but the subject is too extensive to consider further here.

Whittier shared Longfellow's love of balladry and was interested even more in New England legend. "Mogg Megone" illustrates his extended handling of Indian legend, while "The Witch of Wenham" and "The Wreck of Rivermouth" memorialize local superstition. Much early lore is packed into *Leaves from Margaret Smith's Journal*, though the ballads are better known. "Barbara Frietchie" and "Maud Muller" at once come to mind, but the best of the ballads is "Skipper Ireson's Ride." Then, there is the finely restrained "Telling the Bees,"

describing an old English custom also referred to in *Huckleberry Finn*; and "Abraham Davenport," which commemorates an incident of saga texture from colonial Connecticut. The most poignant expression of Whittier's passion against the institution of slavery is "Song of Slaves in the Desert," with its haunting refrain, "Where are we going, Rubee?"

In the "Vision of Sir Launfal," Lowell used the legend of the Holy Grail to advance his nineteenth-century concept of democratic equality. Then, turning to the native tradition of rustic humor current in Sam Slick, the clock-peddler, and in Seba Smith's *Jack Downing Papers*, he wrote *The Biglow Papers*. The wag-gery of Hosea, the pedantry of the parson, and the folk wisdom of Bird-freedom Sawin nearly obliterate the realism of Yankee speech by making the oddities too obtrusive, whereas "The Courtin,'" in which the poet really let himself go, is as "hahnsome as a girl in a gingham apron."

Holmes was little interested in folk material. "The One-Hoss Shay" and "How the Old Horse Won the Bet" come nearest having the quality. The heroine of *Elsie Venner*, who is poisoned by a rattlesnake before she is born, has possibilities as a folk subject, but the author confesses, "My poor heroine found her origin not in fable or romance, but in a physiological conception fertilized by a theological dogma." It is to be feared that Holmes was not the stuff out of which folk writers are made.

Herman Melville had a much keener awareness of folk material. The legend of the white whale is truly fabulous, as fabulous as the big bear sought by the backwoodsmen of Arkansas, and a great deal more significant. Ahab is a legendary figure, and throughout the narrative appear such references as the white steed of

the prairies, the Erie Canallers, the Heidelberg Tun, Tamerlane, Perseus and Andromeda, Jupiter and Europa, St. Elmo Lights, St. George and the Dragon. Truly, *Moby Dick* is "one of the first great mythologies created in the modern world."

Whitman came nearest to Homer in his folk attitudes. He nourished his imagination on the great myths of the Greeks as he raced along the oceanside of Long Island before he drifted into the carefree camaraderie of the open road or looked with the eyes of a prophet upon the epic sweep of civilization. Near the close of his career he addressed in Platte Canyon the "Spirit that Form'd this Scene" with the stirring animism that had characterized his awareness of "these States" as a whole. Into the "Song of Myself" he swept such folk references as the murder of the young men at Goliad, the Western turkey-shooting, coon-seekers going through the regions of the Red River, woolly pates hoeing in the sugar field, the Missourian crossing the plains toting his wares and his cattle—these, and many more. His prototypical American was of far greater than human stature. Unfortunately, Whitman lacked the ear for folk rhythm and phrase, or perhaps there was too much "false festiveness, coyness, posturing, and embracing," as Lewisohn says,⁴ for him to be accepted by the folk. However, his art, with its incremental repetition, its parallelism, its cataloguing, is essentially traditional and constitutes the marchland between folklore and literature.

The first successful attempt to create a native literary tradition came when gentility gave way to local color. Ironically, however, when the self-styled real-

ist, Bret Harte, tried to prove that whatever the frontiersman might lack in culture he made up in innate moral virtue, he established a school of romance hokum that not only set the pattern for every "Western" but survived even the hard-boiled naturalism in Steinbeck. Harte's easy theatricality was matched in the person of Joaquin Miller, with his bandana and sombrero and such pseudo-Byronic poems as "Kit Carson's Ride" and "The Last of the Taschastas."

Edward Eggleston used the Cinderella motif to portray the folkways of the "poor whites" in Indiana. Mary Noailles Murfree sought out the superstitions of the Smoky Mountain folk but did not go to the roots of such life as have Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Jesse Stuart in Kentucky. Meanwhile, George W. Cable regaled us with tales of voodooism and other exotic practices among the Creoles of Louisiana. Joel Chandler Harris embellished the animal symbolism of that highly adaptive race, the Negro, in the homely philosophy of Brer Rabbit in his relations with Brer Fox. Later, Finley P. Dunne created in Mr. Dooley a great mythological figure of our Irish element and Charles Godfrey Leland told amusingly of German-American ways in *Hans Breitmann's Ballads*.

Much of American folklore has a strong infusion of humor and irony. Throughout the old South and Southwest, backwoods humorists exchanged racy, vivid yarns of folkways that suggested to our greatest humorist, Mark Twain, his characteristic matter. Ned Brace, the Georgia traveler, Major Jones of Pineville, Captain Suggs of the Tallapoosy Volantares, Ovid Bolus of the "flush times" of Alabama and Mississippi, Sut Lovingood, ornery, hell-raising mountaineer, and the Reverend Hezekiah Bradley, who discoursed on the

⁴ Ludwig Lewisohn, *Expression in America* (New York: Harpers, 1932), p. 201.

"Harp of a Thousand Strings" definitely pointed to Captain Stormfield, Colonel Sellers, Tom Sawyer, and Huck Finn.

When Mark Twain leaped to fame astride a jumping frog, he used a yarn known not only in the West but often told by Negroes along the levees of the Mississippi. *Roughing It* contained such folk elements as the story of the buffalo hunt, a characteristic tall tale; the story of the old ram, well known in ballad lore; and the story of Dick Baker and his cat, which fits into the Uncle Remus type of bestiary. Baker's bluejay yarn belongs here by right but somehow got into *A Tramp Abroad*. As for Colonel Sellers, he may have been modeled on the rascally Simon Suggs, thinks Constance Rourke, and adds, "If he was not the fabulous single figure toward which the national types had tended to merge, his stride was great; he was accepted throughout the nation as its own."⁵ In *Life on the Mississippi* Mark recalled the tall talk of the keelboatmen as the Child of Calamity discourses on the nutritiousness of Mississippi water or goes through the extravagant ritual of "Whoo-oo! bow your neck and spread, for the Pet Child of Calamity's a-coming!" And in *Tom Sawyer* and in *Huckleberry Finn* the author used enough Negro superstitions and backcountry lore to make the reputation of a lesser artist. Mark Twain's art had the garrulity and inconsequence of the storytellers of stage and tavern, their incongruity, and, it may be added, their irreverence toward the sacred cows; but he lifted the poetry of folk speech to new heights of splendor.

When Carl Van Doren dubbed *The Gilded Age* "a folk Odyssey of our modern money-making," he wished to direct attention to the folklore of re-

spectability and success which began to dominate American thought in the last quarter of the century. Horatio Alger incarnated this myth-triumph of the national will perfectly. While the "folklore of capitalism" was finding its way into novels like *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, *The Octopus*, and *The Pit* and eventually into *The Financier* and *Babbitt*, E. C. Stedman, the "banker poet," found it natural to sing of "Pan in Wall Street." Meanwhile, Hamlin Garland, William Vaughan Moody, Sherwood Anderson, and the whole "Main Street" school offered a realistic and bitter corrective for our fabulous postfrontier optimism.

Valuable as this realism and bitterness have been, they are hardly the answer to the false ideas engendered by both a genteel condescension and a phony "local color." Increasingly it has become manifest that, if we are to have a native cultural tradition, our literature must reach down to the roots. Alongside our classic folk literature is a homelier strain, sometimes apparent in ethnic or other minority groups. It is to these folk elements that twentieth century writers are turning more and more. John A. Lomax made a wise choice when he gathered cowboy songs and other frontier ballads; for now we know that Owen Wister's *The Virginian* was an inadequate "literary" treatment of the cattle range. Roark Bradford has given us *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun*, and it is apparent that *Green Pastures*, *Porgy*, and *Scarlet Sister Mary* are authentic as far as they go. Oliver La Farge, by indicating the adaptations of the Navahos to the necessities of the land, has put an end to considerable foolishness about the Indian. And so one might go on. Vachel Lindsay has sung with compassion about the Chinese laundryman, the Negro, and the Salvation Army. Willa Cather has treated sympathetically the folkways of Bo-

⁵ Constance Rourke, *American Humor* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), p. 219.

hemians, Germans, and Scandinavians, and O. E. Rølvaag has brought out the Viking strain in his characters in their adjustments to a new land and a new people. Carl Sandburg has found native symbols in innumerable acts and traditions of the people.

Robert Frost has written about folks all his life. His poetry is close to daily living, to the comedies and tragedies and the wisdom of hard-handed folk. It is not unnatural that he has made out of the legend of Paul Bunyan a story as beautiful as a Greek legend. Stephen Vincent Benét, in "The Devil and Daniel Webster," transformed pseudofolklore into a modern classic and in "Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer" treated expertly a myth that had previously fascinated O. Henry. In a less heroic key, H. L. Davis in *Honey in the Horn* told a lusty folk tale of the Oregon frontier. More recently, John Steinbeck has given us the lore of the picaresque *paisano* in *Tortilla Flat* and of the earthy "Okies" in *The Grapes*

of Wrath. Such genre studies, and there are others, written for the most part in unaffected prose and true to the patternings of the grain, add distinctly to the veracity of literature in "these states."

Such a survey as this cannot include all the writers of American literature who in one way or another have made use of folklore. It must be patent, however, that our writers have made a more consistent use of the materials and motifs of the people than has been indicated hitherto. We have noted how writers have sought to adapt native lore to literary purpose: first, by patterning it on foreign models in the genteel tradition; then, by a rather specious use of local color, which brought us to the disillusionment that wrote itself out as "Main Street"; and, finally, in the materials and methods of a regional culture. It is apparent also, I believe, that folk sources have given richness to much of the best and most characteristic American literature.

Aldous Huxley and the Novel of Ideas

FREDERICK J. HOFFMAN¹

I

IN HIS *Point Counter Point*, Aldous Huxley has Philip Quarles occasionally jot down in his notebook random observations on the craft of fiction. These may be considered a kind of handbook for a study of the "novel of ideas"—not the novel which incidentally illustrates ideas but the novel which uses them in default of characterization and other

qualities of the traditional narrative. These passages from the notebook are, of course, immensely valuable for those who wish to investigate Huxley as artist and thinker, but their principal advantage is the way in which they illuminate an art form almost peculiar to twentieth-century literary history. This note, for example, is a "statement of principle" for such a novel:

Novel of ideas. The character of each personage must be implied, as far as possible, in the ideas of which he is the mouthpiece. In so far as theories are rationalizations of sentiments, instincts, dispositions of soul, this is feasible. The chief defect of the novel of ideas is that you

¹ Department of English, Ohio State University, Columbus. Author of *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945); co-author of *The Little Magazine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946).

must write about people who have ideas to express—which excludes all but about .01 per cent. of the human race. Hence the real, the congenital novelists don't write such books. But then, I never pretended to be a congenital novelist.²

At first glance, the notion that ideas might take precedence over characters in a novel seems no less than monstrous; and of this reaction Quarles is himself aware: "People who can reel off neatly formulated notions aren't quite real; they're slightly monstrous. Living with monsters becomes rather tiresome in the long run."³ But Huxley has often demonstrated in his novels the fact that ideas may possess qualities which are comparable with those which animate persons—and this particularly in a period of time when ideas are not fixed, calculated, or limited by canons of strict acceptance or rejection. Ideas, as they are used in Huxley, possess, in other words, *dramatic* qualities. Dominating as they very often do the full sweep of his novels, they appropriate the fortunes and careers which ordinarily belong to persons.

I should like to draw further upon the ideas of Philip Quarles as they relate to this unusual and interesting adaptation of a respectable art form. The role which I think Quarles rightfully deserves is that of inventor, shaper, and guardian of the twentieth-century novel of ideas. That his theory of fiction corresponds with, or draws upon, Huxley's own philosophy is also important—for in the case of Huxley one finds a remarkable coincidence of theory with practice (a coincidence, incidentally, which spells his doom as an artist, or, at any rate, makes it impossible for him ever to write a thoroughly satisfactory novel).

To begin with, Philip is in a very spe-

² *Point Counter Point* (New York: Modern Library, 1928), p. 351.

³ *Ibid.*

cial sense a "modern intellectual." He finds a much greater charm in ideas than in persons. For the ordinary, passive, "idea-less" men of the streets and tea-rooms—who, of course, exist on all levels of society—he cannot bring himself to command any respect or affection. In fact, in the world of human relationships he is "curiously like a foreigner, uneasily not at home among his fellows, finding it difficult or impossible to enter into communication with any but those who could speak his native intellectual language of ideas."⁴ He meets each personal word, each expression of feeling or intimacy, with a generalization—one which includes his own circumstances and indicates understanding but is safely removed from the danger of immediate participation. His reaction to the personal circumstances which ordinarily demand intimate contact for their proper treatment is an understanding, bulwarked by such generalizations as make that understanding universally applicable. All of which distresses his wife Elinor, who is often hurt by his kind indifference and puzzled rather than made happy by his "occasional and laborious essays at emotional intimacy," but who is also attracted by his intelligence, "that quick, comprehensive, ubiquitous intelligence that could understand everything, including the emotions it could not feel and the instincts it took care not to be moved by."⁵

Philip's unwillingness to be involved in the affairs of ordinary mortals has no small relevance for his attitude toward his art. For him, *persons* are either specimens, or statistics, or demonstrations—anything which can conveniently be lifted from the personal to the abstract. Thus, too, his humor, which takes the form of wit, of exaggeration, of carica-

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

ture. To the unregenerate intellectual, persons are seldom if ever three-dimensional or actual; or, if they accidentally become so (as they do occasionally for Philip), the experience is a bit disagreeable, even shocking and disturbing. In consequence, his *idea* of personality is substituted for actual *evidence* of personality; ideas are acted out by characters, or demonstrated by them; and finally, a character often assumes the monstrous appearance of such a demonstration. He becomes a caricature which incorporates the furthest possible human demonstration of an attitude with certain grotesque inadequacies of person to which his whimsical creator condemns him. As if in compensation for not having given a character some personal symmetry and identity, he extends beyond credibility the one or few attributes which he does confer upon him.

Philip is a man of great sensitivity to philosophies and points of view. He is capable of accommodating each in its turn. This generosity toward influences is in essence a kind of ever shifting eclecticism, as a result of which each form of thought may at one time attract him and then be deserted for some other.

The essential character of the self consisted precisely in that liquid and undeformable ubiquity; in that capacity to espouse all contours and yet remain unfixed in any form; to take, and with an equal facility efface, impressions. To such moulds as his spirit might from time to time occupy, to such hard and burning obstacles as it might flow round, submerge, and, itself cold, penetrate to the fiery heart of, no permanent loyalty was owing. The moulds were emptied as easily as they had been filled, the obstacles were passed by. But the essential liquidness that flowed where it would, the cool indifferent flux of intellectual curiosity—that persisted and to that his loyalty was due.⁶

Such a point of view is ideal—indeed, it is almost necessary—for the novelist of

ideas. And at one time in Huxley's career, this it is which both Philip Quarles and his creator upheld. The true way of looking at things is "multiplicity," says Philip to his wife on one occasion. Each point of view differs from every other; and all are valid. A large and ample demonstration of the several approaches to morality and fact serves to bring one as close to truth as one may get. "Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen," explains Philip. "For instance, one person interprets events in terms of bishops; another in terms of the price of flannel camisoles; another, like that young lady from Gulmberg," he nodded after the retreating group, "thinks of it in terms of good times. And then there's the biologist, the chemist, the physicist, the historian. Each sees, professionally, a different aspect of the event, a different layer of reality. What I want to do is to look with all those eyes at once."⁷

II

This generous point of view is explained at some length in several of the essays published in the volume *Do What You Will*. They constitute the platform for the novelist of ideas. An idea, or large generalization about human behavior, when it is joined to a character in such a novel, is modified to become an attitude or mood. In the interests of narrative and dramatic movement, this attitude or mood leads to action—but it is always *typical* or *characteristic* action, the adventure not so much of a person as of an idea in its contemporary world. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. The formal essay proves; the novel of ideas demonstrates. Each is strongly dominated by the intellectual character of its author.

As explanation of this point of view,

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Huxley discusses, in *Do What You Will*, the psychological nature of truth. Truth, he says, is internal. A "psychological fact" is valid for the person who holds it, if for no other. This makes for a diversity of truths, for an infinite variety of interpretations, and for an emphasis upon *attitude* as the determinant of the quality of truth. Opposed to this point of view is the tendency toward unity—purely intellectual knowledge which secures a unity from diversity of experience and holds tenaciously to that unity. The weaknesses of Philip Quarles's kind of intellectual are admitted by Huxley in these essays. One must accept life in all its manifestations, he says in one place, condemning Swift for having failed in this regard; and, speaking of Wordsworth's "Handy Manual for Nature Lovers," he suggests that "it is fear of the labyrinthine flux and complexity of phenomena that has driven men to philosophy, to science, to theology—fear of the complex reality driving them to invent a simpler, more manageable, and therefore, consoling fiction."⁸

Each of us searches for his own way of accommodating himself to the universe. But we are frequently afraid of the reality we see and experience, and we hasten to impose upon it some form of order, original or borrowed. We are seldom hospitable toward mere diversity in itself; we are too often afraid of it. Huxley would have us accept the immediate first record of our senses, to be not affrighted but thrilled by their gift of disorder to our minds.

The principal defect in this philosophy of knowing is its marginless and limitless generosity to flux itself—so that one actually escapes the responsibility of *any* interpretation of life by accepting and

entertaining momentarily *each* of them. Its value is great, however, for us who wish to apply it to our investigation of the twentieth-century novel of ideas. For it allows for a generous accommodation of all the currents of thought which have been influential in our times.

III

The novel of ideas is a narrative form peculiar to an "unstable" age—one in which standards are not fixed beyond removal or alteration. It assumes a diversity of mood and intention, but it is careful not merely to label its characters. They are not allegorical figures, for there is no single thing which the drama of their interaction is designed to illustrate. The novel which Philip Quarles wants to write is a novel of diversity in points of view, in each of which the intellectual nature is modified by the local circumstances governing it. Such a novel has a development which consists mainly of the demonstration in terms of human events of the effects of a point of view upon the person who holds it. The drama implicit in an idea becomes explicit when it is shown as a point of view which a *person* holds and upon which he acts. The comedy implicit in an idea is revealed in a concrete demonstration of its inherent untenability. But one cannot repeat too often that there is no "moral" to be drawn from the career and fate of ideas in such a novel. There are obvious enough reactions to several of the ideas in *Point Counter Point*; they are often made grotesque enough and absurd enough for us to evaluate them in a way which they deserve. But there is never any fixed contest between right and wrong, or between the true and the false, from which we are supposed to get what comfort or instruction we can.

One of the chief objectives of the

⁸ *Do What You Will* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), pp. 119-20.

novelist of ideas is to include men of varying temperaments and attitudes within the scope of one narrative and thus to dramatize the clash of these attitudes in his novel. Each character thus has given him (if little else!) a point of view drawn from the prevailing intellectual interests of his creator. On this point of view the character stands, wavers, or falls. Thus, implicit in this type of novel is the drama of ideas rather than of persons, or, rather, the drama of individualized ideas. The structural requirements of such a novel are perhaps simpler than they at first appear. One requirement is to get these people, or as many of them as is possible, together in one place where circumstances are favorable to a varied expression of intellectual diversity. The drawing-room, the party, the dinner—these are all favorite points of structural focus. To supplement them, there are the notebooks (as in *Point Counter Point*), correspondence (which serves as a substitute for conversation and varies the narrative procedure), the casual or accidental meeting of two or three persons, who continue their discussions in one form or another, and the prolonged exposition, in essay form, of any given or chance suggestion which the narrative may allow.

The best examples of the novel of ideas are Huxley's novels of the 1920's. To be sure, he did not always use this form; nor is any of his novels purely a novel of ideas. In his shorter pieces, most notably in "Uncle Spencer," "Two or Three Graces," and "Young Archimedes," Huxley writes charmingly and sympathetically of persons and reveals a remarkable talent for a complete delineation of characters who are interesting almost exclusively as persons. But the works which mark the development of Huxley as a novelist—*Crome Yellow*,

Antic Hay, *Those Barren Leaves*, and *Point Counter Point*—are, each in its own way, novels of ideas. Rarely does a Huxley character give himself away directly; rarely if ever does Huxley fail to give him away. The position, the point of view, of the Huxley character is usually revealed in the course of Huxley's discussion of his tastes, his intellectual preferences, his manner of behaving himself in the society of his fellows. Thus the *idea* which each is to demonstrate becomes in the novel the point of view he adopts—or, actually, *is*. There are varying shades of characterization, ranging from gross caricature to sympathetic exposition. There are degrees of the grotesque in the points of view described in Huxley's novels. Thus Lypiatt of *Antic Hay* is at times grotesque, at times pathetic, but almost always absurd. Gumbriel Jr. is a pleasant enough grotesque, though his weaknesses at times make of him a pathetic figure. Other characters, like Mercaptan, are consistently and superbly themselves on all or almost all occasions.

These persons in *Antic Hay* have ample opportunity to express their individualities in an early gathering in a restaurant—a favorite setting, one in which points of view are given an opportunity for "free-lance" expression. Lypiatt's hostility to Mercaptan is one theme of the novel; it is an opposition of points of view much more than of wills. Lypiatt, the frustrated, would-be genius, is never a match for the genteelly cynical Mercaptan. The inequality reduces the conflict to an absurdity. Typically revealing examples of their conversation illustrate well their points of view and may help to show how the Huxley novel of ideas works:

Lypiatt went on torrentially. "You're afraid of ideals, that's what it is. You daren't admit to having dreams. . . . Ideals—they're not suf-

ficiently genteel for you civilised young men. You've quite outgrown that sort of thing. No dream, no religion, no morality."

"What there is to be ashamed of in being civilised, I *really* don't know," [Mercaptan] said, in a voice that was now the bull's, now the piping robin's. "No, if I glory in anything, it's in my little rococo boudoir, and the conversations across the polished mahogany, and the delicate, lascivious, *witty* little flirtations on ample sofas inhabited by the soul of Crébillon Fils. We needn't *all* be Russians, I hope. These revolting Dostoievskys."⁹

This clash between the vigorous but pathetically awkward and mistaken artist and the mild but venomously precious aesthete and critic rises and subsides throughout the novel, until it issues in physical violence. In the novel we also find the scientist, the incorrigibly self-sacrificing laboratory scientist, devoted to a ceaseless experimenting with endless demonstrations of a fragment of hypothesis. His point of view, consistent to the last lost shred of dignity, is portrayed by Huxley as one of the more pathetic of the grotesques in his fiction.

Perhaps because *Point Counter Point* is more deliberately planned, that novel seems at least to have given each of its points of view some discoverable beginning, middle, and end. By interweaving these points of view, giving them a thematic structure, Huxley has placed a large premium upon his view of supplementary ideas. The interesting fact about this novel is that the several points of view are acted out, tested as it were, in the modern world, and the limitations of each are demonstrated in the individual fates of the persons who hold them. Spandrell, in himself not concerned with large social issues, lends courage to Illidge, scientist-Communist, so that Webley, Fascist, comes to a violent end.

⁹ *Antic Hay* (New York: Modern Library, 1923), pp. 62-63.

Lord Edward's devotion to science is free, because he chooses it to be, of the embarrassing complications which Illidge suffers through involvement in political action. He has instead what his assistant calls "a shameful and adulterous passion for idealistic metaphysics." In each case, the point of view, which becomes quite clear very early in the novel, is so given as to form a core of responsibility for the action consequent upon differences of opinion and opposing and clashing ideas.

IV

"Put a novelist into the novel" (that is, as one of the characters), Philip Quarles advises himself in his notebook. "He justifies aesthetic generalizations, which may be interesting—at least to me. He also justifies experiment. Specimens of his work may illustrate other possible or impossible ways of telling a story. And if you have him telling parts of the same story as you are, you can make a variation on the theme."¹⁰ The role of the novelist in his own novel—how can it be determined and in what way does it shape the novel itself and predict its course? Philip is, of course, talking here of a novelist as one of the characters, not of *the* novelist, not of himself. He does not consider it wise to set up the novelist in a place of authority, so that the other characters may consult him on occasion about what they are to do next, or how they are to feel about what they have just done.

But the author of a novel of ideas is a *person* of much greater stature in his own novel—and his presence is much more obvious, too. And, at least in the case of Huxley, there is a close interaction of the essayist with the novelist. They parallel each other for a time; they frequently

¹⁰ *Point Counter Point*, p. 350.

supplement each other. The essayist is a sort of "supply station," to which the novelist has recourse. He is the "port of call" at which the novelist stops, to take on necessary and staple goods. The reputation of Huxley is chiefly that of the novelist. In another sense, however, he is the essayist-commentator upon twentieth-century morals and ideas. Just as his characters are often subordinate as persons to the ideas or points of view they express, so his novels as a whole are often mere carriers for the cargo of ideas which their author must retail.

The novelist of ideas is essentially an essayist. Whatever talent he may have for the description of setting and of persons is to his advantage, for he is after all earnestly in search of a suitable clothing for his ideas. In so far as a discussion of ideas has implicit within it the qualities which the novel demands, the novel of ideas retains its attraction as a novel, and the author has been successful in giving his comments a form they do not otherwise possess.

The essayist's attempt to give animation to his ideas leads to the novel of ideas. In the course of Huxley's development as novelist, the characters of his creation stumble, swagger, or are carried through his novels, supported almost always by the essayist. Feelings, such as those mixed feelings with which Walter Bidlake contemplates both his mistresses, are freighted with ratiocination. The great difference between this kind of exposition and the *exempla* of medieval sermons is that in the former there is no fixed point of view to bring home to the reader. Rather, there are many points of view; and the reader is asked not so much to appraise as to enjoy them. To illustrate, Walter Bidlake's conquest of Lucy Tantamount proceeds by stages of speculation and comment,

the essayist explaining and analyzing to the last detail of sentiment and caprice. Walter, says Huxley, "treated Lucy, not as the hard, ruthless amusement-hunter he had so clearly recognized her as being before he became her lover, but as an ideally gracious and sensitive being, to be adored as well as desired, a sort of combined child, mother, and mistress, whom one should maternally protect and be maternally protected by, as well as virilely and—yes!—faunishly make love to."

This much one wants, needs, by way of establishing the mood of the occasion. But this is really only the gesture of the doorman, his bow as he opens the door, for the essayist to enter. There follows an elaborate essay on sensuality and sentiment, based upon the relationship between Walter and Lucy, but a separate thing as well, an essay on the subject, broken occasionally to allow for a further demonstration of the points it is making. The commentator says: "This is a situation worthy of lengthy comment, because it illustrates what I have long thought to be true of modern moralities. Let me speak my mind, and in a short while I shall have these two characters back. In what they do you will see that I am right in my analysis." The essay begins: "Sensuality and sentiment, desire and tenderness are as often friends as they are enemies." A comment generalized from experience not real but imagined, projected upon the essayist's screen, to which he points in support of it. Some sentences further, the essayist permits Walter to assume his role as specific example, but the comment is itself a generalization: "Walter's desire to justify his longings by love was only, on final analysis, the articulately moral expression of his natural tendency to associate the act of sexual enjoyment with

a feeling of tenderness, at once chivalrously protective and childishly self-abased."¹¹

Lucy and Walter—sensuality and sentiment, touching each other, embracing, and then separate, isolated points of view, their inherent conflict restored after a brief moment of self-indulgent union. " 'Living modernly's living quickly,' " says Lucy to Walter, as if to underline finally the fact that, in these times at any rate, sensuality and sentiment do not mix well. " 'You can't cart a wagon-load of ideals and romanticisms about with you these days. When you travel by airplane, you must leave your heavy baggage behind. The good old-fashioned soul was all right when people lived slowly. But it's too ponderous nowadays. There's no room for it in the airplane.' "¹²

In the novels of the 1920's, the essayist in Huxley strode along with the novelist. The brilliant essays which he wrote for the *Athanaeum* and for *Vanity Fair* are matched by the conversation and contemplation recorded in the novels; and there is a supporting theory of composition to be found in certain of the essays. Beginning, perhaps, with *Eyeless in Gaza* the essay far outstrips the novelist, who is almost out of sight and has even considered abandoning the walk altogether. What has happened? The novel of ideas requires a poise, a balance, and most of all an eclectic faith in the democracy of ideas. Once the novelist deserts this position, his novels have only one of two ways to go: they may become novels not of ideas but of persons; this seldom occurs, because the conversion of a novelist of ideas is scarcely ever an aesthetic conversion. Or they may become essays almost purely, and the narrative itself a setting for the *exposition* rather than the *dramatization* of ideas. This latter is what

has happened to Huxley's later novels. He is alternately a caricaturist and an essayist; he is no longer a novelist of ideas, but a philosopher who knows not how gracefully to leave the house in which he has lived so graciously all his life. All this is, of course, a generalization, to which there are occasional but delightful exceptions in *Eyeless in Gaza*, *After Many a Summer*, and *Time Must Have a Stop*. But in each case one feels that the essayist is impatient for the artist to finish building the platform, so that he may mount it for his "lesson." Anthony Beavis and Miller of *Eyeless in Gaza*, Propter of *After Many a Summer*, Bruno Rontini and his disciple, Sebastian Barnack, of *Time Must Have a Stop*—to these persons Huxley gives the responsibility for showing the development of the point of view which he himself presents at length in *Ends and Means*.

V

Huxley is no longer a novelist. His recent novels are lengthy essays, to which are added entertainments. But his novels of the 1920's are novels of ideas—ideas clothed, ideas given flesh and bone and sent out into a world in which they may test themselves. What is grotesque or pathetic or noble in each of them is revealed in various ways as the dramatic equivalent of its intellectual status. Compare the dialogue in any of Jane Austen's novels with that, let us say, in *Point Counter Point*. In the one, the larger morality of the day is taken for granted, and only the peculiarities of persons residing in a relatively fixed world receive treatment. In the other, nothing is taken for granted; everything is accepted, but only as it meets and clashes with everything else.

The novel of ideas has important documentary value. Aldous Huxley is but one of several novelists who employ it. Many

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

of the novels of the 1920's are portraits of an artist as a groping and fumbling adolescent—witness Maxwell Bodenheim's *Blackguard*. Others are accounts in novel form, of major intellectual problems which plague the indecisive young artist and force from him eventually some definition of his position and status. Of such a character is Max Eastman's *Venture*; in it one finds, as in Huxley, a practiced scorn of intellectual charlatanism, or a sympathetic tolerance of the women who "come and go / Talking of Michelangelo." The list is long: compare, for example, Floyd Dell's brief sketch of his generation in *Intellectual Vagabondage*, with his novels *Moon Calf* and *The Briary Bush*. John Cournos' *Miranda Masters*, Ludwig Lewisohn's *Stephen Escott*, Kenneth Burke's *Towards a Better Life*, parts but certainly not the whole of Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*: these novels vary considerably in form;

no one of them is a novel of ideas exclusively, but all of them are good representatives of their class.

The novel of ideas is an expression of the tremendous vitality which ideas had in the 1920's; it is also a testimony of an important characteristic of that period: intellectual confusion. To record that confusion requires a tolerance of it and, above all, a willingness to grant for the moment at least that ideas may have a vitality and attraction quite apart from their more sober values, those values they possess when they remain confined within the limits of systematic philosophy or science. Most important of all, this type of novel is a brilliant portrait of the age, or at least of its intellectual interests and habits. That is why one goes to it often and remains with it long when he wishes to know the 1920's and in some way to explain the decade's strange but exciting behavior.

The Eleventh Theme

GEORGE S. WYKOFF¹

[First in a series of solicited reports to show what classroom methods actually are being used in freshman English.—EDITOR.]

THE first of the last five class themes in the English 1 (regular freshman composition)² course at Purdue University is theme No. 11. From it and the following four themes the final semester grade is primarily determined, a grade dependent upon the improvement shown by the student during the semester and upon the quality of written work that he can do as the semester ends. In one sense, then, these last five themes constitute a written final examination in freshman com-

position; they show how successfully the student has achieved the aims of the English 1 course: correctness and clearness in writing and skill in organization.

By the time the eleventh theme is written, the student has had approximately twelve weeks' review of the elementary principles of writing. This review has included three weeks' study of the principles of writing and of organization applied to paragraphing and to the whole theme; three weeks' review of usable grammatical terms and principles, and two weeks' study of the principles of punctuation, followed by an hour's test in each; two weeks' review of and practice in spelling; and approximately two

¹ In charge of English 1 at Purdue University.

² Superior students are assigned to an advanced course, English 32, carrying six credit hours upon successful completion; poorly prepared students are assigned to English A, a noncredit course preparatory for English 1.

weeks' assignments, given intermittently through the twelve weeks, in a book of readings—assignments designed to break the inevitable monotony of the routine drill, to provide subject matter for discussion and writing, and to serve as illustrations of the various principles of composition. In the closing weeks of the semester, when the last five class themes are being written, assignments are made in diction and in the principles of sentence structure.

During the first twelve weeks also, the student has written ten themes: some have been written during the class hour and are as long as the time limit of fifty minutes permits; some have been written outside class, in length 350 words. The subjects, eight to twelve or more for each theme, have been comparatively simple: a personal experience, a timely occurrence, or an idea toward which the student may be expected to have a definite attitude. Under the title of each theme, the student has written a brief outline (usually one major division for each paragraph) and a series of isolated simple sentences, each to serve as a topic sentence for the planned paragraphs (occasionally allowed but not quite so effective is the system of having the topic sentence or topic idea of each paragraph underlined).

From these ten themes the student has learned what his most serious errors are and how they may be corrected. He knows that his grade is determined by the presence or absence of the following errors (which become increasingly serious as they are covered in the handbook assignments): faulty organization; illogical paragraphing; misspelled words; serious grammatical errors; and serious faults in punctuation such as "comma splices," "run-on sentences," sentence fragments, and misuse of the semicolon. For each graded theme he has made out a correc-

tion sheet, which has been checked and returned to him. He has conferred with his instructor at least once, and perhaps several times, during the weeks in which he has written his ten themes. He should therefore, by this stage of the course, be able to show a reasonable proficiency in clearly organizing and correctly writing a short paper.

When the student comes to class to write theme No. 11, he brings with him, for reference, his handbook and a dictionary. Although he has been given the assignment of a class theme and has been asked to review the ten correction sheets in his possession, he has not previously been informed of the subjects. He finds a list of titles on the blackboard. An effective general subject has been: Convey to someone else a special sort of knowledge about a process or a place. Effective specific titles have been the following: "One Year Ago" (used successfully in a class of veterans on the first anniversary of V-E Day); "Advice to a Prospective G.I. Freshman"; "A Letter to My High-School English Teacher concerning My Difficulties with College English"; "The Most Unforgettable Character I Have Met" (patterned after the *Reader's Digest* series); "My Place in the World of the Future." If the outside assignment on a class-theme day is an essay in the book of readings, the essay suggests theme subjects such as the following, when Thomas Henry Huxley's famous discussion of scientific method has been assigned: "How Scientific Discoveries Are Made," "Why Popular Superstitions Are Not Scientific," "Everyday Examples of the Scientific Method"; or, when the essay has dealt with the discovery of radium, "The Use of the Scientific Method in the Discovery of Radium," "A Character Portrait of Mme Curie," "The Human Side of Scientific Investigation."

From his experience in preparing the

first ten themes, the student has acquired sufficient facility in expression to write approximately two pages for theme No. 11. His outline and list of topic sentences under his title (placed in this position for easy checking by the instructor) indicate his plan of organization and the number of paragraphs he will have, usually three to six. He is allowed forty minutes for organizing and writing, and is then given "warning," ten minutes before the end of the hour, in order to permit re-reading and revising. Time not permitting a carefully copied second draft, he turns in his first draft, with its revisions and corrections, at the end of the class period.

As soon as possible after theme No. 11 is written—by the time of the second succeeding class meeting, perhaps earlier—the instructor has the set of papers graded. Symbols and specific page reference to the handbook are put in the left-hand margin of the theme, and the errors themselves are underlined or encircled. A more or less nationally uniform system of symbols is used (such as *p* for punctuation, *gr* for grammar, *cs* for "comma splice," *sf* for sentence fragment, *sp* for spelling) rather than the somewhat peculiar and meaningless symbols found on the inside covers of most handbooks. A tremendous time-saver is the "Theme Reader's Guide," a three-column mimeographed sheet containing the page numbers for all the major and most of the minor errors discussed in the handbook. Certain symbols are underlined in the theme margin, in order to indicate to the student which of his errors are serious and need to be corrected. These underlined symbols are accompanied by special attention-getting marks in the theme: double parallel lines (|| . . . ||) or brackets inclosing the materials which are to be included on the correction sheet. At the end of the theme the instructor writes a brief and supposedly

meaningful and helpful comment either of praise or of blame—if the latter, calling attention to certain errors that need to be reviewed.

From the set of themes the instructor compiles a list of "exercises," which consist of about twenty sentences or parts of sentences containing miscellaneous serious errors discussed in preceding weeks (in earlier assignments, these exercises are limited to the illustration of principles currently being studied). They are typed on slips of paper, and students are chosen at random to copy them verbatim on the blackboard. They are then discussed and corrected by the class; only by coincidence does the maker of the error correct his own mistakes during the class hour. Experience has shown that the correction of such a series of sentences is more interesting and effective than the correction of a similar number of impersonal exercises from the handbook. At the end of this class hour, the themes are returned to their writers.

Every student whose theme No. 11 has received a failing grade is called in for a conference, usually fifteen or twenty minutes in length (a simple notation on the theme, "Conference," causes the student to remain a few minutes after class and make an appointment). During the conference the more serious errors are once again discussed and explained (the student has already had opportunity to consult his handbook about them), and, if time permits, the less serious errors also. Every effort is made to get the student to understand his errors so that he will avoid similar mistakes on the following four class themes.

Between the class hour at which the student receives his graded theme and the next meeting of the class, he makes out a correction sheet, labeled "Corrections for Theme No. 11." From the underlined symbols and the inclosure marks

—the double parallel lines or the brackets—he knows how much material to include. The correction sheet itself consists of a standard-sized page of theme paper with two perpendicular lines drawn in, one near the left-hand margin and one down the middle. In the narrow column the student writes the symbol and the handbook page number. In the wider left-hand column, labeled "Incorrect," he copies the material exactly as it was written in his theme. In the right-hand column, labeled "Correct," he writes the same material, but with sufficient change to eliminate the error. Sometimes only the substitution of one punctuation mark for another or of one word for another is all that is needed. Sometimes two or three lines of writing have to be included. Both the correction sheet and the theme are given to the instructor at the beginning of the class hour.

By the time the class meets again, the instructor has checked the correction sheets. Doing so is a comparatively simple matter and takes not more than fifteen minutes for a set of themes. The checking consists of the instructor's seeing that all errors indicated by underlined symbols have been included on the correction sheet and have been adequately corrected. Each theme is retained by the instructor and is added to the ten already written by the student and placed with them in a specially constructed pigeon-hole type of theme file. Unsatisfactory correction sheets are given to the student for further revision and, when re-corrected, are checked again by the instructor. When satisfactory, the correction sheet is returned to the student, who, theoretically at least,

adds to it his collection of previously prepared correction sheets. Since these contain the serious errors which he is in the habit of making, the student is advised to consult these correction sheets in order to have freshly in mind the errors to guard against in his writing of theme No. 12.

A failing grade on theme No. 11 is serious but not fatal. A failing grade, however, on both this theme and any one of the following four class themes usually means that the student will not pass the English 1 course but will have a condition in writing which must be removed during the succeeding semester. To remove this condition, the student must write, as class themes, a sufficient number of papers which will show that he can consistently do written work of passing quality.

Theme No. 11 is, therefore, the beginning of the end, for most students, of the first semester's work in written composition. From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the procedure involved, on the part of both student and instructor, in the writing, grading, and correcting of theme No. 11, differs very little from the procedure with any other class or outside theme. Perhaps its importance lies in its being considered so seriously as a fairly decisive stage in the composition writing of the student. Theme No. 11 is, at the very least, an indication to him of his final grade: whether this grade will be failing or passing and, if passing, how far above the minimum passing mark it is likely to be. From theme No. 11 the student knows what the quality of his written work must be in the following four themes.

They Were Combustible

CONSTANCE M. McCULLOUGH¹

LAST October it was hard to face a semester of the usual college freshman themes. History was taking tremendous and significant strides forward, and here, pushing pencils over the same pale-green university paper, were the youths whose brothers were making sacrifices around the world. When responsibility adds inches to the stature of a nation's youth, it is harder to look at Joe College and take him for a child; it is harder not to see the man in him, the future citizen, the present thinker. It is a temptation to take him by the shoulder and say, "Joe, before you go out into the world—your little social groove, your respectable job, your right neighborhood, your easy chair in which you will grouse about the government and from which you will never rise to do anything to make it *your* government—before you risk omitting the important things to live by in a future America, before you take the attitude that all is yours for the buying, including arrogance and disregard for others, before you influence the thinking of your friends and children and leave inheritances of prejudice, Joe, I want to have a little talk with you."

Especially was this temptation great in the school of education at Western Reserve University, where five young men and twenty-five young women specializing in art, music, or general education were preparing to be teachers. Here

sat young America: people who owed their heritage to Europe, to Africa, to Asia Minor; people whose fathers kept just ahead of the wolf and others whose fathers could clip a wolf as they clipped their coupons; one blind student and the many fortunate; Jews, Catholics, and Protestants; summer defense workers, business-office workers, and soda-jerkers; married, unmarried, and hopeful.

What would happen if the teacher should light the fuse to this highly combustible mixture of divers interests? Here they sat, amiably dormant, washed, combed, and polished, all very attractive. Here they could sit amiably dormant all year, writing better and better themes on subjects about which there would be no violence of dissension: "The History of Western Reserve University," "Why I Wish To Be a Teacher," "Thomas Hardy's *Eustacia Vye*." Or they could discover that an Eleanor Roosevelt was sitting next to a Westbrook Pegler, that a Colonel McCormick's elbow was touching a Franklin Roosevelt's, that a Communist was adjacent to an old-line Republican. The vocabulary development in the latter situation should be stronger if not greater!

So, after having disposed of the introduction to the library, study helps, source theme writing, and a pretest and analysis of the English needs of each student, the teacher appointed a committee to determine a series of Friday programs. Everyone proposed topics and voted on them; then the committee assigned to a different panel of students

¹ Assistant professor of English and director of the reading clinic, Western Reserve University. Co-author with Ruth Strang and Arthur Traxler of the recently published *Problems in the Improvement of Reading* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1946).

each week the responsibility for leading the discussions selected. Each panel required certain kinds of preparation by the rest of the class, so that Friday everyone had something to contribute.

With lamentable docility the class agreed to additional topics proposed by the teacher as bases for weekly research among magazines and books. Written reports on these topics were brought to the class for discussion each Monday. Wednesday class meetings and monthly individual conferences were devoted to the reading and English expression problems which the students evidenced throughout the semester. Thus, while the purposes of English were being served, the students were engaged two days a week in topics of declared interest to them and other topics which the teacher felt would awaken them to their world and to their responsibilities as teachers and citizens.

There was the inevitable waste motion, the chaff amid the wheat—topics poorly chosen or student leaders clumsy in handling group discussion, leaders who talked too much or let a few others talk too much, leaders who lost the reins and permitted heated duets to wander off the subject, subjects too broadly worded and ill defined. But throughout these mistakes valuable learnings occurred, and the later programs, of which the teacher was more proud, were evidences that the lessons of the poorer programs had not been lost upon the group.

Two topics in particular led the work off to a good start. One was a student-selected program of interesting letters from friends all over the world. These ranged from descriptions of life in Guadalcanal, Australia, and Tunisia to letters from a young schoolmaster in early Cleveland to his father in New York, boasting of \$17 a month and lamenting his lake journey, in which a

contrary night wind reversed the progress of the freighter two-thirds of the distance it had traveled the previous day. While, with due deference to English, the class commented upon the factors which made one letter interesting and another dull, an important value of the program was the awareness of different kinds and degrees of living and the fact that Cousin Bill in Australia and great-grandfather, while beyond reach in different ways, were both understandable, plain-spoken young men.

The second topic of value was "What Is Education? What Should It Achieve in Me and in the Children I Teach?" This served to draw forth ideals without the usual blush and to bring students to set up their own educational purposes. Most of the class seemed to hold well-oriented, well-adjusted, and consequently happy, living above other goals. This aim led easily into subsequent topics regarding social attitudes and responsibility.

A study of prejudice involved two confidential themes, one an inventory of a student's own prejudice—its origins and growth, and the second a progress report on a campaign against the prejudice. The discussion following the first theme was a general and objective consideration of the sources, expressions, and dangers of prejudice and methods of subduing or eliminating it. The value of this for oral English was, of course, the problem of drawing upon one's own situation to reach a general statement whose meaning would be clear and applicable to other situations.

More gratifying, however, was the fact that a group of cool heads with a desire for truth rather than self-justification was gaining a balanced picture of the beast that hounds humanity and of methods by which he may be throttled.

Prejudice, it was decided, had a varied origin: a feeling of insecurity (which prompts the desire to step upon the certainty of another's neck); contempt for or instinctive hostility toward behavior and appearance which one does not understand; other people's remarks and overt expressions of prejudice; shelter from contact with different kinds of people; public emphasis upon the evil-doer in another racial, religious, political, occupational, or social group; war propaganda; and a feeling of frustration, which creates a desire to pass the blame for one's own maladjustment. Expressions of prejudice were found to range from the extreme of Hitler's open hostility, segregation, and denial of certain rights to the lesser manifestations such as avoidance, remarks against and remarks connecting a recognized evil with the object of prejudice. The danger of prejudice was described as the development of ill-feeling, lack of co-operation, and cumulative hatred, all of which result in a reduction of efficiency on the part of both the hater and the hated. From the standpoint of human progress, if not of fairness, prejudice was undesirable. The final consideration was of ways to subdue or eradicate it. This included learning more about the object of prejudice through books, discussions, and associations, and forcing one's self to generous behavior, which would not only assist the eradication of prejudice but keep that attitude from influencing other people.

There followed a study of poverty, introduced by an excerpt from Green's survey of Cleveland,² in which the statistician contrasts an impoverished census

² Howard Whipple Green, *Planes of Living in Cuyahoga County as Depicted by the Real Property Survey, Part I: Special 1940 Report of the Real Property Inventory of Metropolitan Cleveland, 1941*, pp. 4-5.

tract with a plush-lined one; a paragraph from Archibald MacLeish "that those who live by contempt for the people will die by contempt for the people—that it is the people to whom the future really belongs";³ selections from Atwood Townsend's "The Mathematics of Death,"⁴ which yields statistics on the nutritional value of true democracy; and a few paragraphs from Russell Weisman's daily economics commentary with regard to the soundness of the "made-work" theory.⁵ The class was free to choose any phase of the problem. A girl whose family had a financial interest in the impoverished census tract investigated the living conditions of such areas and proposals for their correction. Several students, including one whom the class learned good-naturedly to call "Miss British Empire," chose the question of India's independence. Some read about one of the countries designated as the nearest approaches to democracy (Switzerland, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand).

The students began to appreciate the ways in which they, in their varying degrees of comfort, affected and were affected by the poor and destitute. They knew more about Cleveland, more about people who lived unlike themselves, and came closer to the realization that there, but for the grace of God, went they.

While Congress dallied with an inadequate tax bill and the public expressed everything but effective remonstrance, the class discussed the reasons why the tax bill was being considered, the objections people had to higher taxes, and, in the light of the foregoing, ways in which

³ Archibald MacLeish, "What Do We Mean by Victory?" *Free World*, I (October, 1943), 306-11.

⁴ Atwood H. Townsend, "The Mathematics of Death," *Free World*, I (October, 1943), 313-20.

⁵ Russell Weisman, "An Economist's Point of View," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 14, 1943.

the taxes should be increased. The defense worker's daughter rued the siphoning of time-and-a-half, the wealthy students mourned corporation taxes, the idealist in the corner thought it would be lovely if he could start the world over again from scratch; but three points were generally recognized: that selfish interests should be subordinated to the general good, that a minority should not be penalized just because it is unable to assert itself, and that every citizen must voice his opinions to his representatives if the United States government is to be his government.

Other topics dealt with postwar problems: education after the war, postwar employment, and what to do with the Axis nations. Again the reading was varied, the points of view were different, and the air was electric. But a student whose solution ignored certain facts was supplied with those facts by ardent objectors, a student who failed to recognize psychological factors was quickly corrected, and a student who met with approval had mixed feelings of pride at having pleased so critical an audience and of suspicion that, none having objected, he could not have said anything very important. The experience left the group skeptical of pat solutions, ready for realistic ones, wondering whether any plan would surmount the selfish interests which periodically bring universal disaster.

English specialists may rightfully look askance at this hybrid course, observing that it cannot justify its label of "English 101" unless it benefits the students in respect to English. Evidences of growth in English were found in the reduction of mechanical and grammatical errors, in the marked improvement of all but three students in theme organization and of all but one in paragraph structure. According to Forms A and B of the Essen-

tials of English Tests,⁶ administered in October and February, respectively, the class made an average gain twice that normally expected in a semester.

But what do the students themselves have to say?

Different viewpoints were exchanged in class, and tempers were taught to control themselves. The topics were timely and interesting to everybody. I came in contact with many different ideas I might never have encountered.

An interested and alert populace is the foundation of a good democracy. If we have been stimulated to solve some of the problems of society or at least to recognize the complexity of these problems, I say the course is of great worth.

I had very practical experience leading a class discussion. Then, too, I learned to express myself clearly and concisely. I had to or someone else would have interrupted and my ideas would have been lost.

As one is forced to examine himself more carefully, he automatically becomes a better person with whom to live. He becomes more considerate of others, more tactful in his speech, and more specific in the expression of his own ideas.

Young adults need a place in their lives where they can discuss their plans and ideas, a place where they have either sympathetic or understanding listeners. This advantage is often deprived by parents and friends.

It made me take stock of myself and find out what I really thought, and it made me realize that I have obligations toward others as well as myself.

There are those who would maintain that the temptation the teacher of this class experienced in October was distinctly a temptation of the devil. And, of course, only the future can tell. The sole disproof will lie in finding that thirty adults in the years to come are more conscious of their citizenship re-

⁶ Dora V. Smith and Constance M. McCullough, *Essentials of English Tests, Grades 7-13* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Educational Test Bureau, 1939).

sponsibilities, more concerned with the welfare of others, more alert to the significance of world and national affairs, more determined to think for and express themselves. Unable to offer this

evidence either now or in the hereafter, the teacher herself likes to think of this semester as her bit toward the world as it might better be, and of the temptation as prompted by an angel.

Remedial Composition for Advanced Students

J. O. BAILEY¹

AFTER two years of this Churchill was removed and sent to Brighton to a school where two ladies kept a school with less masculine rigidity. He liked poetry and was often called upon to recite poems, which despite his lisp, was one of the best recitors in the school."

The author of these interesting sentences, holding an undergraduate degree from another institution, came to the University of North Carolina to pursue graduate work in psychology. But, when he handed in his first term paper containing these sentences, others equally curious, and words spelled "swiming," "defience," and "rearmiment," he was given a cc ("composition condition") and told that he must take and pass non-credit work in the "CC Laboratory." Not even graduate students are exempt from the requirement that they write good English.

Various articles concerned with the advanced student who is deficient in English composition indicate that the problem is serious and widespread. The method of the CC Laboratory, worked out at the University of North Carolina over a number of years, approaches a solution.

Fortunately, the spur came from outside the English department. In 1922, when the university was being rapidly filled with students who in an earlier gen-

eration would not have come to college, a professor of zoölogy addressed the faculty on the subject of semiliteracy among upperclassmen; some of his earnest advanced students in science could not organize a term paper, construct a pointed paragraph, or even spell "laboratory." Professors in economics, pharmacy, history, and French echoed his remarks. No one doubted the thoroughness of the freshman course in English composition or the competence of students to write fairly well at its conclusion; but everyone agreed that something should be done about students who slid back into old, bad habits in their sophomore, junior, senior, and even graduate years.

To seek a solution for this university-wide problem, the president appointed a university committee of seventeen men and empowered it to make regulations and to act. The chairman of the committee was a professor of geology; members were drawn from every department of the university. The committee selected a member from the English department to act as secretary and to carry out its policies.

The first task was to single out all students in advanced courses who wrote poorly. In the method gradually worked out and in use today, the secretary sends to every member of the faculty at the end of every term a form for reporting "any student whose English composition

¹ Department of English, University of North Carolina.

contains frequent errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc., or is in phrasing, structure, or coherence below the standard we may reasonably expect of University students." Each professor is asked to fill out this form and return it to the secretary and also to report the student to the Central Records Office by sending in the student's final grade for the course with a *cc* attached, as "*Acc*," "*Dcc*," or even "*Fcc*."

Then the student with a *cc* must take work in English to remove the *cc* from his record. He may not receive a degree from the university while he has a *cc*. If he makes *Dcc* on a course in music or in sociology, for example, he may repeat the course and perhaps change his *D* to an *A*, but he will still have to remove his *cc* by other methods, whether or not he has additional credits and so does not need the course for graduation.

The *cc* is removed by work in composition. The English department co-operates, but each student's work is reviewed by the secretary of the committee, who alone can authorize the Records Office to remove a *cc*.²

During the first dozen years after 1922 various methods for removing *cc*'s were tried out. By 1935 the system had settled down to removal of a *cc* by a student's choice of several methods. A student might take and pass a composition course: a freshman English course without credit (for the advanced student already has this credit) or an advanced composition course for which the student might receive credit. Or a student might take a special drill-course, called English CC, without credit. Or he might take and pass a special examination offered each term. A student was allowed to take the examination the first time without pre-

² Sometimes the professor who assigns a *cc* changes his mind about the student's writing; he may then remove the *cc* by sending in a change of grade to the Central Records Office and to the secretary.

senting any evidence of preparation for it; but, if he failed, he was required to present evidence of preparation, by getting help from tutors or in other ways, before taking the examination again. The examinations were given by three members of the English department; two of the readers had to mark a paper "Pass" for the student's *cc* to be removed.

By 1935, however, certain weaknesses in this system were evident. To offer English CC each term cost the university money—an important consideration in the depression years. Students choosing to take the examination would take it over and over (with just enough gesture of preparation to be called "evidence") and would finally manage to slip through without learning anything. Since a student might fail and try again, no time limit could be set for the removal of a *cc*; many a student receiving a *cc* in his sophomore year (and perhaps accumulating others along the way) would finally get his *cc*'s removed in his senior year. Some students deliberately postponed work in composition in order to remove all *cc*'s with one examination in the last term of the senior year—and then, if they failed, pleaded with their deans for special examinations.

In 1935, therefore, the secretary of the committee recommended the establishment of the present CC Laboratory to replace other methods. This laboratory, unique in some of its features, was then established and has operated with a good deal of success up to the present.

The CC Laboratory is essentially a system for methodically tutoring students in small groups, each according to his needs, until each is able to demonstrate that he has mastered the fundamentals of English composition and is able to write as well as the "average" college student in America. The laboratory is

conducted in a room set aside and equipped with necessary writing tables and filing cabinets. An instructor holds the laboratory open for four 2-hour periods each week—two afternoons and two evenings—and each conditioned student goes there on a schedule convenient to him and works under the guidance of the instructor.

The laboratory is listed as a noncredit course in the Extension Division (so placed because hours of work and length of course are irregular); each student pays to the Extension Division a fee of \$5.50, good for six months of laboratory work. If he fails to complete his work and remove his *cc* in six months, he must pay an additional fee. The fees are set aside for the support of the laboratory, chiefly to pay the salary of the instructor.

When a student receives a *cc*, he is expected to enter the laboratory immediately; if he does not do so by the end of the following term, he may be suspended from the university, a regulation found necessary to compel students to seek help immediately. Once he enters the laboratory, he must attend regularly four hours each week, any four of the eight hours when the laboratory is open. If he fails to attend four hours and to work steadily, his failure is reported to his dean, and the student is placed on probation. He must continue this regular attendance and steady work, term after term if necessary, until his *cc* is removed.

The first thing which a student does in the laboratory is to take a diagnostic test. The instructor has a supply of scientifically worked out, objective, published tests in several forms. The test used today is one that has been given to thousands of students, and the national average for each part of the test is known. The test has seven distinct parts: punctuation, grammatical classification, errors in grammar, sentence structure,

reading, vocabulary, and spelling. A student may pass the test by passing all parts; the passing grade for each part is the national average for college students. If a student passes all parts and is able then to write in the laboratory a competent theme, his *cc* is immediately removed, on the assumption that he is as good as the average and the instructor assigning the *cc* was in error. One or two students per hundred given *cc*'s pass all parts of the diagnostic test at once.

Usually, a student is able to pass two, three, or four parts of the test. These parts are checked off; he is not required to study what he passes. The instructor examines what the student fails and assigns him work in a variety of texts and drill books, and the student sets to work. He does no work outside the laboratory, but files away his work at the end of the period and, on returning, gets it out and starts work where he left off. As he completes each piece of work, he takes it to the instructor, who goes over it with him. When both student and instructor believe that the student has learned enough of any one subject (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) to pass a test on that subject, the student is given another form of the test. If he passes the part he has been working on, it is checked off, but if he fails it, he keeps on working until he can pass.

Some students have been able to complete the laboratory work in a few weeks; a few others, much weaker to begin with, have taken two years. Very poor spellers, for instance, or students exceedingly weak in vocabulary have had to labor for months to remedy this single, serious deficiency, the drill work often taking such forms as the student's copying a hundred times, day after day, a list of words he customarily misspelled. (Learning something new, we have found, is not nearly so hard as breaking

old, bad habits and then forming new, good ones.) The work proceeds for each student as fast as he can master it, but a high degree of mastery is required for removal of a *cc*.

When a student has passed all parts of the final test, he talks over a topic with the instructor and then composes a theme of from five hundred to one thousand words. If the first theme is good and clean of errors, the instructor hands all evidence to the secretary of the committee for his review of the work done and recommends that the student's *cc* be removed. If the first theme is not good, the student talks it over with the instructor and writes another, and another, until he shows that he can write a good paper by writing one there in the laboratory.

Between 1935 and 1942, when the student body numbered nearly four thousand, about one hundred and ninety students each year received *cc*'s; about one hundred and twenty-five each year passed through the laboratory and removed their *cc*'s. (The remaining sixty-five dropped out of the university for various reasons, for the students who receive *cc*'s are not the cream of the student body.) A good many *cc*'s were assigned in sophomore literature courses, where the professors are especially watchful for poor writing; but numerous *cc*'s have been assigned in every department of the university: art, chemistry, economics, library science, music, philosophy, sociology, etc.

The system is no miracle-worker. Perhaps some students would have to be born again to become good writers. Occasionally, in fact, a student has received a *cc* in his sophomore year, worked in the laboratory and removed it, and received another in his junior year. But this event is very rare. Evidence has accumulated to show that the system is reasonably effective: students who pass through the

laboratory write with average competence thereafter. Furthermore, the presence of a rigid system with high requirements has a bracing effect throughout the university. No student wants to be assigned a *cc* and be forced to expend money, time, and hard labor on a non-credit course. An instructor generally gives a student warning by mid-term, with a *cc*? on a test or daily paper, and care in the student's composition is usually visible thereafter. Students who have received no warning are nonetheless careful in preparing their papers. Directly affecting only a small proportion of the student body, the *cc* system indirectly affects every student on the campus and is an influence making for neatness and carefulness in papers prepared for any course.

At least once each year the chairman calls the committee together to hear a report by the secretary and to discuss policies. From time to time the secretary appears before the faculty to render a general report, to renew faculty attention to the system, and to inform new members of it.

During the war years, when the decrease in number of students in the laboratory allowed the instructor a breathing spell, invitations were sent to students to come to the laboratory for help with their compositions, and a great many came. The instructor helped these "volunteers"—who did not have to pay the fee, attend regularly, etc.—in various ways, aiding some to organize term papers, giving others drills in spelling, and even teaching the entire *cc* course to a few who wanted it. We hope that the CC Laboratory may be of value to "volunteers" among returning veterans who passed freshman composition before Pearl Harbor and are now back in the university, a little baffled by the problem of themes and term papers.

Round Table

THE EASIEST WAY: A FARCE

I

Our school theaters resemble closely that unengaging personality, Mr. Pecksniff, who, you will recall, was likened "to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never going there." For while the plays studied in the formal curriculum are overwhelmingly "classics," the plays we do on the school stage are rarely so. The school theater on the whole is content to play the sedulous ape, to mimic the theater of Broadway, and to render it in a pale second carbon. And this is considerably less sensible because in many cases the films are offering to the same audience their own transmogrifications of the same plays glittering with a chromium and steel-clear mechanical perfection the school theater cannot possibly approach.

Many high schools and some colleges, of course, content themselves with even less: with the farces and dining-room pieces rigged up for their particular use. And these are plays sterile beyond even the most distant imagination of the teacher busy in her ivory classroom with serious commendations of Great Plays.

The truth is, we respect the classics with a respect much closer to terror than love. We bow to them in the classroom and shut our minds to the most important realization of all—that they belong not in the classroom but in the theater. For this reason it would seem the most elementary sense to propose not a law (there are too many of them, and laws can be broken) but an intelligent understanding among teachers that Shakespeare should never be taught to any student who has not first seen at least a dozen of his plays in the theater.

Such an understanding would serve my own wicked, improving purpose very well,

for the schools would then be bound to do the plays on their stages, since even an immensely successful Broadway production in even very extensive tours still touches only a small fraction of the people. The film producers have obviously not the slightest intention of examining their own responsibilities. They have already bowed to the Bard (the Sweet Swan); they have produced variously a gaudy burlesque of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, an occasionally luminous hash of *As You Like It* (which is hash, of a sort, to begin with), and a sound if topheavy production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Most recently and hopefully we hear of Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*; but it took the British government to sponsor that. All but the latest of these films are out of circulation, and letters of inquiry about them bring no hope at all that they will be generally accessible. Indeed, saving the teacher, the only moderately accessible servitor (and one employed too rarely by teachers) is the phonograph record. The Mercury Theatre transcriptions, with a few others, offer some substantial aid, but necessarily limited aid still.

II

Occasionally, to be sure, the theater in the school admits its responsibility. A good many universities and not a few high schools can point with a very proper pride to a list of unquestionably great plays done by them during the last two decades or more. But school populations change every three or four years, and the fine plays done in that time are considerably fewer than the dotting of fine plays through a decade. It is the proportion of bad or indifferent plays to good ones that disturbs me.

Now it is in theory much more difficult to do some good plays than a good many bad ones. For the latter have been shrewdly manufactured to make the smallest possible

demands. And the director assists this too often not by calling upon his wits or imagination but by asking weakly of a play not how good it is but how many men there are in it and how many settings.

The classics were, a good many of them, written in expansive days when these lets and hindrances were less important than they seem in the school theater. And the classics in many cases need more preparation than lesser plays. They need cutting, for instance. But this is a labor neither mysterious nor terrifying, and a labor already accomplished in a good many cases. (See, for instance, the Globe Theatre editions of a handful of Shakespeare's plays, arranged by Thomas Wood Stevens, whose love and knowledge are sound guides still.) A good many of the classics need a large acting company or the use of doubling. But it is my experience that students, however suspicious they may be at the outset, are invariably more stimulated and vastly more content at working in a good old play than an indifferent new one. And I have never seen them more content than when working like the very devil at rehearsals of Shakespeare. The bugaboo of settings (and even of costumes, although "modern" dress was good enough for the players at Shakespeare's Globe) is absurdly exaggerated.

But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill

is and always will be infinitely more effective in setting the stage than the nicest machination of a switchboard. Shakespeare sets his own stage. For costumes: Why not a Petruchio in a decayed football uniform or *The School for Scandal* in a sorority house?

III

In all this preoccupation with indifferent plays, we are, as well, forgetting or denying the heritage of school drama—a drama with a history that is for a long space much of the whole history of the stage and its plays. It was with a pedagogic purpose that the masters of St. Paul's set their boys to acting Terence in 1528. *Ralph Roister Doister* was

written by Master Nicholas Udall for school performance. One cannot study the Elizabethan drama with any care at all and fail to observe the part played in it by the law schools, the inns of court.

Today, however, the cleavage between the classic in the classroom and the play on the school stage is embarrassingly great. We teachers talk about the heritage of our students and the infinite riches in the spaces of English drama. But we fail miserably in the consistency that would implement our talk.

If teachers will do great plays on their school stages, the students will not be laggard. The most persistent observation from undergraduates after performances of Shakespeare's plays is not unlike Lady Macbeth's wonder: "Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him."

Can we not stop this weak-spirited and weak-witted shutting-up of playbooks at the end of the classroom hour? Let the book stay open and take it to the school theater, where play and teacher and class will have as much enjoyment as work and much more understanding too.

JAMES SANDOE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

WHITE TAILS AND TULIP EARS

It is the time just as evening is drawing near when a hush falls over the land. The time when the wind ceases so that the trees don't move and stillness reigns over all. Birds cease their twitterings and the air remains calm and peaceful.

I paused in my reading. It was a theme written for an assignment in freshman composition; the author, Ruby Stankevitz, a student, quiet, attentive, alert.

I had talked about the business of description, suggesting the value of appeals to the senses. I had argued against excessive use of modifiers: "When you feel that you have to use an adjective with some noun that has come to your mind, see if you can't think of a noun that will carry the load of adjective and noun by itself. When you use an adverb, that means the verb it modifies

isn't adequate alone; find a better verb. . . ." I had declared the richness of the English vocabulary and had pointed out how effectively good writers worked with simple words, by choosing the right ones. And I had emphasized the importance of choosing a subject really of interest to the writer.

Certainly my student had achieved simplicity. There was an incomplete sentence in the paragraph, and the "stillness reigns over all" expressed what stillness has done in many a student theme. I read on.

This is the time the deer come to drink. It seems that the leader knows that in this hour the herd may safely drink.

I crossed out "It seems that" and imposed a red capital upon "the." "The leader knows that in this hour the herd may safely drink."

A line of iambs. "This is the time the deer come to drink. . . ." "This is the time the deer come *down* to drink." I resumed. "Sniffing the air, he assures himself that all is well and the herd may procede [I underscored *procede* and jotted *sp* in the margin], so they all fall in line daintily picking their way through the trees until they come to the familiar trail that leads to the water."

"Until they come to the familiar trail. . . ." Pure iambic pentameter. I started a little, then picked up the opening sentence and read once more what my student had written. As I reached the bottom of the page I reached also a conviction: the girl knew deer, and cared about them.

. . . a flick of a white tail, tulip ears wide open, and head up, with one or two graceful bounds each, the whole herd vanishes into the forest.

Not a sound has been made and except for the slight movement of the leaves, no one would know that they had been there seconds before.

She knew her deer and she cared about them. She made me care about them. She made me care also about her writing. We had read *John Brown's Body*, with its varied rhythms, and had talked a little about versifying. With her imagery and her rhythm,

how far did she fall short of poetry? Slight changes, I thought, might turn the material into blank verse.

For several days the idea lingered with me. How much changing would be called for? How much liberty ought I to take? How much time had I to experiment thus? What would it be worth?

It would be worth something, I decided, if I could show how close the relation between prose and verse can be. I stole an hour and made a tentative beginning. The project was nothing that fitted into my schedule. I had work to do. But it was tempting, and I yielded. In the course of a few days I found that very little was needed to shape some of the sentences into rhymed stanzas. Partly by laboring at it and partly, of necessity, by letting it lie fallow, I finally produced a page of verse and set a title.

FOREST EVENING

Touched by no restive breath, the trees now stand

Unstirred; chirpings and drowsy twitters sink
To nested peace. A hush falls on the land:

This is the time the deer come down to drink.

The sunset smoulders low; a quiet gray
Creeps up behind an early star, still pale.

They fall in line and pick their dainty way
Until they come to the familiar trail.

Their leader halts. They test the air before
They take it with dark eyes alert and wide;
They near the forest edge and stop once more
To sniff the solitude on every side.

One dares the open, by soft ripples lured,
Pauses and listens to the phantom break
Of silences on silence—reassured,

Moves like a ghost on tip-toe to the lake.

The thirsty follow; others linger still
Vibrantly poised to guard the drinking herd;
They hear beyond the muted water-spill,
Or distant splash—dropped nut, or fluttering
bird.

They drink, but not too deeply to discern
Dangers that whisper with the least of sounds.
Heads up, with tulip ears wide open, turn.

The white tails flick—vanish in lightning
bounds.

Sudden and swift and noiseless in their flight,
Like darting birds they melt into the air;

Leaving the thousand eyes of wakening night
A nodding branch to show that they were
there.

Some of the lines are my own. Some of the handling is mine, but the material is my student's. The idea content is practically all hers. The weaknesses are mine, and I acknowledge them freely. I had no time to

play the lapidary. But to my student should go what is really important—credit for being the inspiration behind the experiment. She wrote about what she cared about, and made me care about it also.

JOHN A. CAPPON

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

SEMINAR

SISTER MARY JEREMY¹

The boy with the lavender eyelids lowers them,
Musing austerely on *Love's Labour's Lost*;
Smoke-wreaths bemuse a desperate company
Run fast aground upon Bohemia's coast.

Time's whirligig brings in revenges still—
For Robin Goodfellow behind the door
With Cobweb, Moth, Peaseblossom, and the rest
Stalks airily about the ink-stained floor.

Their leafy wings brush serge; their moony eyes
Peer vainly under rims of tortoise shell;
A crumpled paper spoils their morris-dance—
Robin knits mossy brows. All is not well.

Though all may end well, these will not remain;
Not all fools are Athenian, they perceive.
They flash in parting, and a student blinks
As sudden dewdrops spangle on his sleeve.

¹ Rosary College, River Forest, Ill.

Report and Summary

About Literature

FOR TWO PERIODICALS AUTUMN brought anniversaries. In October, *Theatre Arts* appeared with a gay new cover to mark its thirtieth birthday and noted happily that it is the oldest illustrated theater magazine in history. The younger *American Scholar* with its fall issue celebrated its fifteenth year as a "quarterly for the independent thinker."

IT IS AN INTERESTING COINCIDENCE that as Edith J. R. Isaacs steps down from the masthead of *Theatre Arts*, which owes its longevity in large measure to her editorial prescience, she should find occasion to reintroduce to her readers the playwright whose early creative activities she so skillfully chronicled and interpreted upon its pages. For Eugene O'Neill, after twelve years of silence, has brought forth a new play, *The Iceman Cometh*. Of this Mrs. Isaacs says little but, in anticipation of its scheduled performance this winter, writes a biographical essay, "Meet Eugene O'Neill." In this she revisualizes and reevaluates the force which O'Neill exerted upon the American theater between 1921 and 1934 and makes clear to a potential audience who may never have seen an O'Neill play why we oldsters await this new one with such interest. "When O'Neill stops thinking of himself as Jeremiah," says Mrs. Isaacs, "he can be a consummate story-teller." And she also makes clear our debt to him; how badly we stood in need of "a fearless, gifted, hard-hitting, passionate iconoclast to break through the conventions of every kind—spiritual, literary, social, technical—that hedged us in." It was the blare of O'Neill's trumpet, she writes, that cracked the fortress walls.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR'S TABLE of Contents for its anniversary number certainly belies the fears which were held at its birthing that it would be a pedantic journal for the mutual admiration of Phi Beta Kappas isolated from the world. In fact, so far has it identified itself with the problems of the world that the reader often has a hard hunt to find in it anything "purely literary." However, "The Misery and Necessity of the Quarterly," a timely forum discussion, appears in the autumn number. John Crowe Ransom, editor of the *Kenyon Review* discusses "These Little Magazines"; Paul Bixler, chairman of the editorial board of the *Antioch Review*, "An Audience for Standards"; and Delmore Schwartz, editor of the *Partisan Review*, "An Unpleasant and Important Fact." Some of the problems delineated remind us mightily of our own! But some comfort comes from Ransom, who exhorts little magazines to make a virtue of their littleness, since there is no real competition with the big ones, the functions of each being essentially different. Bixler defines the dual purpose of the small quarterly "to give generous space to unknown authors and to unpopular and misunderstood ideas; and at the same time to follow standards of seriousness, of thoughtfulness and even of form." The unpleasant and important fact which Schwartz points out is one elucidated long ago by Matthew Arnold and just as true today, namely, that we do not, as Pindar, Sophocles, and Shakespeare did, live in a period "when society was in the fullest measure permeated by fresh thought." In our time, "only the critical review can provide this current of ideas." Which is the reason why most quarterlies have to be subsidized!

A LITERARY REVIEW WHICH PROPOSES to serve generally the purposes set forth by Bixler and, specifically, "to make the ideas of the West available to young Arab intellectuals and at the same time to present in French and English translations the best of modern Arab literature" is said soon to be brought out by Taha Hussein, "Egypt's greatest living poet," who is founding a publishing house for the same purpose. This is reported by Paul Tabori in "Writer Meets People" (*Saturday Review of Literature*, September 28). Tabori, a Hungarian author and journalist, is now in England after postwar peregrinations through the Balkans and elsewhere. He reports complete abandonment of the ivory tower by European writers of all nationalities and relates that he "could almost merge their voices into one Voice," the voice of the writer who faces the years of this uneasy peace "with the conviction that he must not shut himself off from the people because, perhaps for the first time in history, the people need the writer." Conditions of life do not let the European writer experiment too far from his readers; he has to share their lice and their crusts. But while the writers have been drawn closer to their readers, their isolation from the West is "incredible." This cannot help but affect the international community of letters and international thinking. Tabori feels among other things that the British and Americans should "pour books, magazines, newspapers into Europe instead of the niggardly trickle that gets there."

"LITERATURE AND READERS IN the USSR" by Marc Slonim in the October *Soviet Russia Today* describes the rise and growth of the gigantic number of readers in contemporary Russia. According to Slonim, literature is not regarded by Russians as entertainment. The average Russian reader "believes that a novel or a poem is essential to life and performs a vital social function." This attitude is a historical one in Russia, but with the abolition of illiteracy after the Revolution tens of millions of young people

came to look upon literature "as an indispensable part of everyday existence." Slonim gives some specific examples and then goes on to assert that the literary standard of the new reader is high, Russian and world classics actually forming the artistic taste of the masses. He states emphatically that best-sellers in Russia are not so because the state proclaims them as such but because the readers pick them out and read them and, thus, "practically make the government recognize the value of the book." Because both readers and government set value on writers of merit, the Soviet writer does not suffer from social loneliness and isolation. "He is not a bystander but an active participant in the life of his country. He feels close to his reader because both of them have a common ground of collective work and identical aspirations." These conditions, says Slonim, are determining the whole trend of Soviet literature.

TOLSTOY'S IDENTIFICATION OF himself with the Russia of his day is made clear by Philip Rahv in an essay in the autumn *Partisan Review* entitled "Concerning Tolstoy." Rahv elaborates the point that in a Tolstoyan novel "cleavage between life and art is of a minimal nature," and "it is never the division but always the unity of art and life which makes for illumination." He then goes on to discuss the rationalist and anti-Romantic in Tolstoy, the sources for which are to be found in the eighteenth century, and the existential center of his art, which caused him to be "much more a novelist of life and death than he is of good and evil."

W. L. WHITE, WHOSE BOOK *REPORT on the Russians* was severely criticized last year, defends himself and the book in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for October 5. In his "Report on the Critics" he charges that the sixteen supposed Moscow correspondents who joined in condemning his book had not read it. He quotes from it a number of statements complimentary to the

Russians and insists that his critics quoted only his uncomplimentary remarks. White feels that if his book had appeared now when, he thinks, Americans' attitudes toward Russians have changed considerably, it would have been well received. "Never try to tell people on Christmas Eve that there is no Santa Claus. Let them find it out for themselves," he says bitterly.

A SEARCH FOR BELIEFS IN W. H. Auden's poetry is made by Donald Stauffer in the autumn *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Stauffer believes that the most serious and dangerous shortage the postwar world faces is the shortage of beliefs. He selects the poetry of Auden for his subject because Auden, frank, inquiring, comprehensive, has found the need and the way to accept faith. This is an excellent, simply written analysis to which teachers of contemporary literature may well direct their students. It does not need a professional critic to decipher the critics' code. Stauffer traces the development of Auden's thought and poetical techniques from his undergraduate days at Oxford to his latest long poem, "For the Time Being, a Christmas Oratorio." He finds that Auden's inevitable drift toward the Christian faith is explained by two deep-seated beliefs: his belief that all men are sinful and that all men are brothers. But Stauffer is not just trying to find a Christian poet in our time. The value of his essay is its objective tracing of the intellectual and emotional struggle which engaged the mind of a gifted contemporary (who is also honest), as it is reflected in his poetry.

"HOMAGE TO WILLA CATHER" BY E. K. Brown appears in the fall *Yale Review*. This year has brought Miss Cather's seventieth birthday, and Professor Brown pays tribute by reviewing her progress as a woman of literature. He does not try to decide whether or not her novels are illustrations of social or aesthetic tendencies. Rather he analyzes each of Miss Cather's works as "entities delightful and significant in themselves, made so by a beauty of craftsmanship and depth of vision." *A Lost Lady*,

Shadows on the Rock, and *Obscure Destinies* he thinks her best, except for *Death Comes to the Archbishop*, which is best of all. Her vision is of essences, he writes, and what we have gained in her craftsmanship is above all a beautiful lightening of the novel form. "Miss Cather saw that if she abandoned the devices of massive realism, if she depended upon picture, and symbol, and style, she could then disengage her essential subject and make it tell upon the reader with a greater directness and power, help it to remain uncluttered in his mind."

THE OCTOBER *ATLANTIC MONTHLY* carries several delightful essays. Robert Frost writes on "The Constant Symbol" (the poet's use of metaphor), and James Branch Cabell tells of a myth in the making, that of General Robert E. Lee, which grew in the South at the same time as the Lincoln legend was gathering its facets in the North. "Almost Touching the Confederacy" is an autobiographical essay of Cabell's childhood in Richmond, but it is more than that. It describes beautifully how the so-called "essence of history" is created. It might well make salutary student reading, as would also Hugo Johanson's "My Wrestle with English." Johanson is Swedish-born. His struggle to become articulate in English is similar to Hardy's, and his description of it might well cheer any class in freshman composition.

THE FIRST POSTWAR EXCHANGE of teachers between the U.S. and Great Britain is taking place this year. That such an exchange might be established on a permanent basis for better international understanding is the wish of Major J. E. Mompugo. In an article entitled "Blueprint for War Memorials" in a recent bulletin of the International Institute of Education, he suggests that "if the cities and towns of Great Britain and . . . of America could be persuaded to set up commemoration funds to be devoted to an exchange of scholars and teachers, then we would have worthy war memorials."

Books

SHALL WE TEACH LITERATURE BY TYPES?

The title, *The "Types Approach" to Literature*, states the purpose of the book,¹ but it gives little idea as to the wealth of material hidden between the forbidding textbook cover and the sixteen pages of notes and fourteen pages of references. Mr. Ehrenpreis' purpose is to answer these questions: "What is the types approach? What have been its origins, its contributions, its unused possibilities? In the light of the development reviewed here, what should be the teacher's concept of types and of the value of the types approach?" The work is purely historical until the conclusion; there the "types approach" is urged in the teaching of world literature.

The first sixty pages, Part I, deal with "genology," defined as "scholarship in genre." Here in compressed form are discussed the problems of divisions into kinds of literature, trends in literary criticism, philosophies concerning those divisions, outstanding writers from the Greeks to the present day who have contributed much to the study, and early college texts (1895-1915) based upon the types approach. One would not choose Part I for summer reading.

Part II deals first with the development (1890-1910) of the types approach in college and universities, the study being based upon a survey of eight institutions. To any college professor of English this sketch of the emergence of the study of literature—not the study of historical facts or biographical data—and the pleasant recognition of the part played by well-known men ("for there were giants in those days") provides stimulating material. The second division shows the development of the types approach in

high school from the first textbook, Mabel Irene Rich's *Study of the Types of Literature* (1921), to the statement in 1930-31 by Dora V. Smith that "except for a simple, unclassified list of books to be read, arrangement by types was the most common organization of high-school literature."

For inexperienced teachers this textbook might well prove tedious reading, for they are concerned with the present and future; but for the teacher with years of experience this carefully written history will evoke stimulating memories of writers, texts, experiments attempted, and endless faculty discussion.

LUCIA B. MIRRIELES

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

The Modern Language Association of America began in 1883, intent on justifying its existence and clarifying its aims and methods, but gradually it devoted itself more and more fully to historical and linguistic research. About ten years ago, during the depression and the growing European crisis, it returned to its first task with a series of committees and publications on trends of scholarship, aims of literary study, and "trends in education adverse to modern languages."

Eventually this agitation resulted in a continuing Commission on Trends in Education which, under the chairmanship of Henry Grattan Doyle, has issued two pamphlet "confessions of faith." The first, *Language Study in American Education*, written chiefly by C. C. Fries, is an admirable study now out of print. The second, *Literature in American Education*, written chiefly by Howard F. Lowry, is an eloquent statement widely circulated in reprints by the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore.

¹ Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The "Types Approach" to Literature*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1945. Pp. 153. \$2.25.

Dr. Thomas Clark Pollock is chiefly responsible for the third pamphlet in this series, *The English Language in American Education*,¹ which Dean Doyle's Foreword describes as treating "practical applications of the philosophy in the first two reports," together with "a statement of principles and objectives for English teaching on all levels." In spite of this official description, the pamphlet (as its title indicates) deals much more with language than with literature, and much more with objectives than with practical applications.

The presentation is in three parts. Six developments in our understanding of language are summarized in the first part with admirable compactness and clarity. Among them are substitution of linguistic science for neoclassic rules, the development of American English as a standard of correctness, and changes in the teaching of grammar. These matters are not news to most English teachers, but an expansion of this section and distribution of it to teachers in other fields would do much to bring them up to date. The theory that teachers of other subjects should demand correct English from their students fails utterly when these teachers perpetuate the ideas they learned decades ago.

The second section, "The Need for the Study of English," is least rewarding in reminding us that the organization of our thoughts depends on our ability to speak, listen, write, and read well.

Part III, "The English Program," deals with elementary and secondary schools and colleges. In the three pages on colleges, clinical treatment is advised for special cases, tutorial criticism for freshman papers, Middle English and history-of-the-language courses for English majors, and at least one foreign language for prospective English teachers.

The chief fault of this section is that its

small space prevents the distinguished committee from presenting what they know and have stated more fully elsewhere. To cite an extreme example, on the much-debated problem of tests, there is room for only one uninformative sentence: "A series of diagnostic tests when the student enters [the secondary school] is highly desirable, assuming, of course, that the tests are valid measures of the various abilities involved in the use of English."

For the general reader this pamphlet is an excellent summary of current ideas, but for readers of *College English*, acquainted with numerous fuller treatments of the same problems, there is little new here.

W. L. WERNER

PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE

MATTHIESSEN ON JAMES

That amiable gentleman, Van Wyck Brooks, was in his earlier phase our chief murderer of literary reputations. (The later Brooks, of *The Flowering of New England* and afterward, who can find something kind to say even of N. P. Willis, is accused by F. O. Matthiessen of neglecting form and content alike, of merely alluding to books instead of analyzing them, and of having reduced literary history "to a pastiche of paragraphs culled from memoirs.") If the blow Brooks—faithfully echoed by Parrington—dealt in *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925) was less lethal than that which he had delivered five years earlier in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, the reason was simply that James has always had fewer readers than Mark and that such readers as he does have are of a type less likely to be swayed by evangelism.

On the other hand, one must admit that, while few special students of Mark Twain have ever accepted the Brooks thesis that cowardice, greed, and uxoriousness transformed a potential satirist of the first magnitude to a mere funnyman—it still main-

¹ T. C. Pollock, W. C. DeVane, and R. E. Spiller, *The English Language in American Education*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1945. Pp. viii+32. \$0.25.

tains a surprising vogue, to be sure, among persons who prefer reading about books to reading books—many have seen Henry James's development as a development away from life. Among these are all the haters of James's later involved and tortuous style, like William James and Mr. Dooley, who wanted to cry, "Just spit it right up into Popper's hand." The heaviest of the artillery leveled against the Brooks position in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* was that which Bernard DeVoto commanded in *Mark Twain's America*; Max Eastman finished off the job neatly in *Heroes I Have Known*. Mr. Matthiessen's book,¹ I should say, does for James what DeVoto did for Mark Twain.

It is only fair to say that agreement this time will be less complete because Mr. Matthiessen, necessarily, is more concerned with critical evaluation than Mr. DeVoto was, and less with mere facts. He accepts James's own view that his years of mastery were those which embraced *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Golden Bowl*, and the fragment of *The Ivory Tower*—it is comforting to recall that one said this one's self in reviewing Brooks!—and he studies them in detail in the light of the unpublished notebooks and letters in the Houghton Library at Harvard. (The most endearing thing about the extracts from the notebooks is the fresh evidence they afford of James's complete consecration to his art and his own blessed sense of power; the most surprising is their directness and simplicity of style.)

Mr. Matthiessen writes, it should be understood, well this side idolatry. He wonders whether Milly Theale, in *The Wings of the Dove*, is "of sufficient emotional force to carry a great work"; *The Golden Bowl* he

finds at last "a decadent book, in the strict sense in which decadence was defined by Orage, as 'the substitution of the part for the whole.'" But the net result of his investigation is, unquestionably, to leave Henry James a greater—and a more "human"—writer than he has ever seemed before. As clearly as Mr. Brooks himself, he realizes that James paid a high price for his art. But on this question he practically indorses Herbert Croly's extraordinarily perspicacious verdict of forty years ago: "Yet I am not bold enough to say that the price is too high. An achievement so extraordinary and so individual as that of Henry James is absolutely its own justification, and American critics should recognize this plain condition by considering it chiefly upon its own merits, rather than upon its defects or effects."

One of the best chapters is that on "The Religion of Consciousness," in which what, for lack of a better word, one may call the spiritual implications of James's novels seem more significant than ever before.

That Henry James is our greatest American novelist hardly needs arguing at this late date. Certainly he is the greatest artist among our novelists. He has always exerted an influence out of all proportion to his circulation, and it is impossible to understand the modern novel without understanding him. Of the many books and articles that the current extraordinary revival of interest in him has produced, the most useful to the uninitiated is Clifton Fadiman's anthology of his *Short Stories*,² an excellent selection, intelligently introduced. But this book of Matthiessen's is incomparably the profoundest study, and the most important.

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

¹ F. O. Matthiessen, *Henry James, the Major Phase*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1944. Pp. xviii+190. \$2.50.

² Random House, 1945.

In Brief Review

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

FOR THE GENERAL READER

Bright Day. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. Harper. Pp. 286. \$2.50.

Gregory Dawson, successful writer of screen plays, has a private message for his audience: "Expect nothing but the worst from a world like this." Time, postwar England. The story (in first person) moves on two time levels. There are many characters and a keen appreciation of social problems. The central point is that a lust for money dulls man's sense of values—man's lasting worth lies in his creative energy. Mr. Priestley says this is his favorite of the novels he has written, but many readers may find it a bit dull.

Tales from the Plum Grove Hills. By JESSE STUART. Dutton. \$2.75.

Twenty good short stories by the Kentuckian who wrote *Man with the Bull Tongue Plow* and *Foretaste of Glory*.

Hotel Bemelmans. By LUDWIG BEMELMANS. Viking. \$3.00.

By the author of *The Blue Danube*, *Hotel Splendide*, etc. Thirty-six stories of the old favorites and three new ones. For Bemelmans' fans and observant hotel guests. One hundred and two inimitable drawings by the author.

Lord Hornblower. By C. S. FORESTER. Little, Brown. Pp. 322. \$2.50.

The fifth (and last?) Hornblower novel. Lord Hornblower, as a beginning, is sent to quell a ship mutiny for which he is in no way responsible. With the aid of Captain Bush he concludes his struggle with Napoleon, but narrowly escapes both being shot at dawn and the irresistible Marie. His Lady Barbara is waiting at home.

My Boyhood in a Parsonage. By THOMAS W. LAMONT. Harper. \$2.50.

Financier Lamont writes unpretentiously of his Methodist father, of his years at Exeter and Harvard, and of his work for New York newspapers. Nostalgic; kindly and simple reminiscences.

As He Saw It: The Story of the World Conferences of F.D.R. By ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT. Duell. \$3.00.

Son Elliott reports intimate conversations and observations of his father, including plans for America's future. Elliott purports to tell the inside story of the Atlantic Charter and important conferences. Foreword by Eleanor Roosevelt. (For the unbiased reader.)

The Idols of the Cave. By FREDERIC PROKOSCH. Doubleday. \$2.75.

By the author of *The Asiatics*, but very different. Two love affairs with a background of sophisticated New York society, socialites, and titled, rich war refugees. Satire.

The Devil Is a Lonely Man. By MORRISON WOOD. Crowell. \$3.00.

An added interest is attached to this book because the manuscript was found in the locker of a soldier who died in a prison camp. Somewhat prolix and grandiose in style but promising.

The Lowells and Their Seven Worlds. By FERRIS GREENSLET. Houghton. \$4.00.

The lives of the Lowells form a social history of America. A fine chronicle of one of the leading New England families. There seem to have been no black sheep. Very readable and enlightening.

Where Are We Heading? By SUMNER WELLES. Harper. Pp. 397. \$3.00.

An analysis of United States foreign policy, the diplomatic movements and tendencies during the close of World War II and the immediate peace-making which followed. Mr. Welles believed in Roosevelt's quality of leadership and assumes that he had a genius for dealing with foreign diplomats which might have improved our standing in international affairs. Welles urges that more information regarding foreign policies should be given to Americans. Informative, stimulating, controversial.

The Count of Monte Cristo. By ALEXANDRE DUMAS. Whittlesey. \$3.50.

A complete and unabridged one-volume edition with forty full-page line drawings by Norman Reeves.

Gustave Doré Album: All the French Fairy Tales. By CHARLES PERRAULT. Didier. \$3.50.

A deluxe edition to meet the growing interest of adults in fairy tales and the Doré illustrations.

A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. By SIGMUND FREUD. Liveright. \$1.98.

An authorized translation, written in simple, popular language.

Roses and Buckshot. By JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG. Putnam. \$3.75.

An autobiography of a great American artist, illustrated with a group of his pictures. Mr. Flagg's views of celebrities add spice to his story.

Mistress Masham's Repose. By T. H. WHITE. Putnam. \$2.75.

Ten-year-old Maria, who lives with servants and governess (the vicar's tender care could be dispensed with) in a castle, discovers a colony of Lilliputians on her grounds. Satiric, amusing. October Book-of-the-Month Club choice.

Best Detective Stories of the Year. Edited by DAVID C. COOKE. Dutton. Pp. 316. \$2.50.

Stories chosen from representative magazines, including pulps.

Album of American History, Vol. III: 1853-1893. By JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS, Editor-in-Chief. Foreword by the EDITOR. Scribner's. \$7.50.

Picturing events from "The High Noon of a Nation" through Civil War and Reconstruction to "End of the Frontier." Each of the nearly 450 pages carries two to three briefly annotated pictures. These pictures are from historical paintings, sketches, and photographs and naturally have a charm of their own. They tell the tale of progress in all phases of life during forty crowded years.

More French Fairy Tales. By CHARLES PERRAULT. Retold by LOUIS UTERMAYER. Illustrated by GUSTAVE DORÉ. Didier. \$1.75.

A quickened interest in fairy and folk tales has led adults to a new belief in the little people. The Doré illustrations enhance this volume.

The Burning Mountain. By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER. Dutton. \$2.75.

Twenty-three new long poems by the 1938 Pulitzer Prize winner.

The Time of Man. By ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS. Viking. \$5.00.

A boxed edition of this beloved novel originally planned for spring publication is now available. Beautiful wood engravings by Clare Leighton.

French Follies and Other Follies. By FRANCIS STEEGMULLER. Reynal. Pp. 174. \$2.00.

Twenty stories from the *New Yorker*. Human foibles humorously portrayed.

Blind Alley. By GEORGES SIMENON. Translated from the French by STUART GILBERT. Reynal. Pp. 206. \$2.50.

By the author of *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By*. Simenon presents dramatically a group of idle rich and not so rich wandering Europeans against a background of southern France.

The Poet in the Theatre. By RONALD PEACOCK. Harcourt. \$2.50.

In brilliant essays the author has written of ten dramatists to illustrate the problem of poetry in the

theater. There is also an essay on "Tragedy, Comedy, and Civilization." T. S. Eliot, Henry James, Grillpanzer, Hebbel, Ibsen, Chekhov, Yates, and others are included.

Old Vermont Houses. Rev. ed. By HERBERT WHEATON CONGDON. Knopf. Pp. 192. \$5.00.

Mr. Condon is a Vermont architect. There are 140 attractive photographs of houses and interiors, showing beautiful stairways, fireplaces, etc., with descriptions, histories, and pointers for remodeling and cherishing old buildings. A very stimulating book for homeowners.

The Pleasure of Their Company: An Anthology of Civilized Writing. Edited by LOUIS KRONENBERGER. Knopf. Pp. 649. \$5.00.

In his Introduction the author calls this a literature in which urbanity, irony, elegance, skepticism, sophistication, wit, or the contemplation of those who possessed such qualities play a leading part. They range in time from Petronius to Aldous Huxley and Lord David Cecil. A connoisseur's collection. The author sharply criticizes a "spurious or vulgar kind of worldliness" and "an unhappy word," *sophistication*, with its shabby connotations and uses.

On Second Thought. By JAMES GRAY. University of Minnesota Press. \$3.00.

For twenty years James Gray has reviewed and interpreted books. In this book are reprints of some of his best writings of others years and also more recent and contemplative discussions of the same authors. Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neill, Pearl Buck, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Dos Passos, Hemingway, J. P. Marquand, Thomas Wolfe, Saroyan, Willa Cather, and Ellen Glasgow are among the fifty authors honored.

The Sudden Guest. By CHRISTOPHER LAFARGE. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

A psychological study of a very self-sufficient woman who during the New England hurricane of 1944 relives the events of a similar hurricane in 1938. Possibly it has hidden meanings. September Book-of-the-Month Club co-selection.

Science, Liberty, and Peace. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. Harper. Pp. 86. \$1.00.

The well-known novelist argues for decentralization of industry and for international disarmament. Increasingly centralized industry will require increased government powers to control it—and power corrupts all men. Inside each nationalist is a boy gangster likely to use weapons if he has them.

Mixture for Men. Edited by FRED FELDKAMP. Doubleday. Pp. 239. \$2.50.

Sketches, some fictional and some factual, all either humorous or adventurous, by Thurber, Benchley, Liebling, Broun, O'Hara, Kantor, and others less well known.

The Kafka Problem. Edited by ANGEL FLORES. New Directions. \$5.00.

Forty European writers and critics, with others from the Americas, analyze the genius of Kafka in these critical essays.

The Natural History of Nonsense. By BERGEN EVANS. Knopf. \$3.00.

Many readers, even those with superstitions of their own, will delight in this study of the fallacies, the gullibilities, and beliefs of people in general. Are you convinced that dogs have clairvoyance, that cats are friends of witches? Do you believe in the wolf-children? Upon what do you base race antagonism? Does hair turn white from sudden fright? Entertaining, witty, instructive.

Best Film Plays, 1945. Edited by JOHN GASSNER and DUDLEY NICHOLS. Preface by JOHN GASSNER. Crown. \$3.00.

Eleven plays, including *The Lost Week End*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *None but the Lonely Heart*, Ernie Pyle's *The Story of G.I. Joe*, *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*, and others. Photographs.

Paul Bunyan of the Great Lakes. By STAN NEWTON. Packard. Pp. 188. \$2.50.

The author has had unusual opportunities to collect and study legends and songs of lumberjacks. A continuous narrative of American folklore.

Not So Wild a Dream. By ERIC SEVAREID. Knopf. Pp. 516. \$3.50.

A gripping story of firsthand experiences written by a leading war correspondent. He is especially concerned with the moral and social problems of the world as a whole and of those countries where he saw young men dying—why? Moving and dramatic.

Lake Pontchartrain. By W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS. "American Lakes Series." Bobbs-Merrill. Pp. 376. \$3.50.

The discoverers, pioneer days, the romance of fabulous New Orleans, with Mardi Gras, World War II and its industrial development—these are only a part of this interesting study. Fascinating details, personages, sports, and end maps.

Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings. Edited by ROY P. BASLER. World. \$3.75.

Critical and analytical notes by editor. Nearly 250 state papers, speeches, and letters, some hitherto unpublished. Frontispiece—facsimile reproduction

of Lincoln's letter to Major General Hooker. Several photographs of Lincoln. Preface by Carl Sandburg, who says that this book is a challenge to our hope and imagination about America and the Family of Man. Over 800 pages.

The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. By LEWIS H. HERMAN. Rudd. \$2.75.

A Huck Finn enthusiast who has lived near the Mississippi for years and made exhaustive research has written a sequel to Mark Twain's book.

Thieves in the Night. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. \$2.75.

Palestine is the locale of this present-day novel, which deals with the misfortunes of the Jewish people and the troubles of an agricultural commune. Controversial.

The Farm. Rev. ed. By LOUIS BROMFIELD. Harper. \$3.00.

Boxed with *Pleasant Valley*. Illustrated.

Come, Tell Me How To Live. By AGATHA CHRISTIE MALLOWAN. Dodd, Mead. \$3.00.

An account of an expedition to the Near East which the author made with her archeologist husband. Very interesting. Illustrated.

It Happened in Taos. By DR. J. T. REID. University of New Mexico Press. Pp. 118. \$2.50.

A simple yet exciting story of the organization and work of the Taos County Project, a successful experiment in co-operative economic planning and action in an underprivileged rural area.

Science Yearbook of 1946. Edited by J. D. RATCLIFF. Doubleday. Pp. 245. \$2.50.

An annual survey, by means of reprints of articles from popular magazines, of advances in (chiefly applied) science. De Kruif does not appear in this volume, but the whole has his optimistic tone.

FOR THE TEACHER

The Improvement of Teacher Education. A Final Report by the COMMISSION ON TEACHER EDUCATION. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education. Pp. 283. \$2.00.

The summary volume in the series of final reports of a three-year co-operative study in teacher-education. This appraises the Commission's experience and presents conclusions and recommendations. Among more detailed partial reports have been *The College and Teacher Education*, *Helping Teachers Understand Children*, and *Evaluation in Teacher Education*.

The University at the Crossroads. By HENRY E. SIGERIST, M.D. New York: Henry Schuman. Pp. 162. \$2.75.

A collection of essays and addresses by the Director of the Institute of the History of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University. A humanistic approach to problems of education by one who is not merely a distinguished doctor of medicine, but also a graduate in history, economics, sociology, and oriental philology. Warm, human, thoughtful, and provocative.

Campus versus Classroom. By BURGESS JOHNSON. Ives Washburn. Pp. 312. \$3.00.

The book is subtitled "A Candid Appraisal of the American College." It is. It is also Mr. Johnson's own academic biography. The matters with which he deals he therefore handles familiarly, but his training as a scholar enables him for the most part to regard them objectively also. In reading it most college teachers will find themselves on known terrain.

Newton Demands the Muse. By MARJORIE HOPE NICOLSON. Princeton University Press. Pp. 178. \$2.00.

Traces the growing interest in Newton's prismatic discoveries by the poets of the eighteenth century, especially during the period immediately following his death, 1727-50. These "scientific" poets, Miss Nicolson finds, were even more familiar with Newton's *Opticks* than with his *Principia*. Her work is a study of their attempt to express in verse his theories on the nature of light.

George Colman, the Younger. By JEREMY F. BAGSTER-COLLINS. King's Crown Press. Pp. 367. \$3.00.

The biography of a man who, as playwright, producer, and, finally, censor, dominated the English theater during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century.

The Year's Work in English Studies, Vol. XXIV: 1943. Edited by FREDERICK S. BOAS. Oxford University Press. Pp. 243. \$3.75.

This volume was edited by Professor Boas for our new NCTE affiliate, the English Association. Twelve other scholars, each specialists in various aspects of language and literature, have assisted him in assembling the materials and writing the fifteen chapters which summarize the most significant work in English studies on both sides of the Atlantic in the year 1943.

FOR THE STUDENT

Radio the Fifth Estate. By JUDITH C. WALLER. Houghton. Pp. 483. \$3.40.

An admirable introduction to a highly complex agency by the Director of Public Service, Central

Division, of the National Broadcasting Company, who has also been the central figure in the organization and development of the Radio Institute sponsored co-operatively by the N.B.C. and Northwestern University. The eight sections into which the contents are divided deal, respectively, with "The Structure of Broadcasting," "Programming," "The Public Service Program," "The Sales Organization," "The Audience," "Servicing the Program," "Engineering," and "Educational Broadcasting."

Chief Patterns of World Drama. Edited by WILLIAM S. CLARK II. Houghton. Pp. 1152. \$5.50.

An anthology of twenty-nine plays, from Aeschylus to Anderson, selected to illustrate the chief patterns of Occidental dramaturgy. Each play has an individual introduction, and these introductions together compose a running history of dramatic and theatrical activity from ancient Greece to present-day America. Mr. Clark is a scholar who loves and knows the theater. These introductions are not, therefore, mere editorial handy work, but a distillation, for student readers, of the specialist's knowledge and enthusiasm.

An Introduction to Stuart Drama. By FREDERICK S. BOAS. Oxford University Press. Pp. 443. \$4.00.

The third volume in a trilogy which began with *An Introduction to the Reading of Shakespeare*, followed by an *Introduction to Tudor Drama*. For Professor Boas, the dramatists who wrote between the accession of James I and the Restoration do not represent a "decline" from their Tudor predecessors, but rather a group, the members of which, both collectively and individually, have compelling attraction and merits of their own. He gives special attention to the critical analysis of plots and characterization and assembles the fruits of recent varied research, which he integrates with his own fine scholarship.



Reading for Writing. 3d ed. By JOHN T. FREDERICK and LEO L. WARD. Crofts. Pp. 527. \$2.00.

The main body of these "studies in substance and form" represents a core of thoroughly tested selections. Some included in earlier editions have been omitted. New ones have been added, especially to the division on "Ideas and Opinions."

The New Training for Effective Speech. Rev. ed. By ROBERT T. OLIVER, RUPERT L. CORTRIGHT, and CYRIL F. HAGER. Dryden Press. Pp. 414. \$2.75.

Considerably re-written since the first edition. Designed for freshman and sophomore college students. Phrased in their language and directed to the solution of their speech problems.

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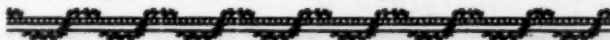
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